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Lectures on
The Historians of Bohemia

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Lectures on The Historians of Bohemia

BEING THE ILCHESTER LECTURES
FOR THE YEAR 1904

BY

THE COUNT LÜTZOW

HON. PH.D. OF THE BOHEMIAN UNIVERSITY OF PRAGUE
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THE BOHEMIAN ACADEMY

LONDON: HENRY FROWDE, AMEN CORNER
NEW YORK: 91 & 93 FIFTH AVENUE
TORONTO: 25-27 RICHMOND STREET WEST

1905

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Printed by HORACE HART, at
the University Press, Oxford

PREFACE

IF one thing is less known than the history of Bohemia it is the life and the works of the historians who have recorded the annals of that country. The undoubted fact that many works of ancient Bohemian writers have been lost has led to the supposition that no native records of my country except those belonging to the last century are existent. Bohemian history, as far as it has been written at all, has been mostly written on German lines; the hostility between the Slav and the Teuton, which has continued without interruption since the mythical Čechus and his Slav companions arrived in Bohemia, is a sufficient proof that records founded on the evidence of the adverse party could have little value. Palacký was the first to point out, early in the nineteenth century, that many writings of priceless value for the history of his country were still preserved in manuscript in the archives of certain Bohemian castles. It is thus that the writings of Březan Slavata and Skála ze

Zhoře—the last-named of whom would be accounted a great historian in any country—became known, though only to a very limited extent. The history of Bohemia is perhaps one of the saddest in the world's story. A country that for a time had been in the van of civilization became almost a desert, and suffered for centuries from political, national and ecclesiastical oppression.

It is perhaps natural that those who belong to a small and little-known nation should consider it to a greater extent their duty to make their country known, than those who are citizens of a country that has world-wide fame. The words of the great historian Palacký, spoken on the occasion of his last appearance in public which I have quoted at the end of my last lecture, have long impelled me to do what little is in my power to make my country known and refute those who have endeavoured to tarnish its fame.

I therefore owe a great debt of gratitude to my friend Prof. Morfill, who kindly suggested that I should lecture at Oxford on a subject concerning Bohemia. Nothing could be more in accord with my wishes and the interest of my country than that

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I should speak of the historians of my country in the world-famed University City that is connected with Bohemia by many ancient links. I wish also to thank the Curators of the Taylor Institution for their kindness and the facilities they have given for the publication of these lectures.

LÜTZOW.

December 10, 1904.

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I

AMONG the many greater and smaller misfortunes that have befallen the Bohemian nation the misuse of the national name is by no means the one that is of least account. A Bohemian requires a thorough knowledge of the English language to grasp what the word 'Bohemian' generally conveys to Englishmen. The ancient mistake which identified the Bohemians with the gipsies undoubtedly originated in France. As the great Bohemian historian Palacký has suggested, many gipsies arrived in France bearing passports signed by the Bohemian kings, and this was the original cause of the mistake. The peculiar, modern signification of the word is, however, I think, a creation of Henry Murger, and owes its origin to his *Vie de Bohême*. Thackeray first used the word in its modern sense in the English language.

It is at the present day, I hope, scarcely necessary to state that the Bohemians have no connexion whatever with the gipsies, and that their language, a Slavic one, forms part of the great Aryan family of speech. Next to Russia, which in literature as in politics is the most prominent of Slav countries, and Poland, Bohemia is the country in which Slavic literature has flourished most; and in Bohemian literature historians certainly hold a very high rank. The reason is not difficult to seek. There was a period when the Bohemians were makers as well as writers of history, and it has been the

fate of Bohemia to play at least once a part in history—as did the Netherlands and Sweden in later days—that was quite disproportionate to the extent and population of the country. After the battle of the Žižkov, when the Bohemians defeated almost the whole world in arms against their capital, and yet more after their wonderful victories during Prokop's campaigns in Germany, the Bohemians were at least within measurable distance of obtaining the supremacy in Europe—at least for a time. As writes one of the chroniclers of the Hussite wars: 'The Bohemians had never before fought so glorious a campaign in Germany. Had they craved for glory as did their ancestors, they would have marched onward as far as the Rhine and subdued many countries; but they contented themselves with their rich spoils and returned to Bohemia.'

Only a few years ago I should have mentioned as earliest Bohemian historian, Cosmas of Prague, 'the father of Bohemian history,' as he used to be called. Historical research, very active since the revival of the Bohemian language at the beginning of the last century, has rendered it at least doubtful whether Cosmas was the first of Bohemian historians.

The learned Professor Pekář of the National University of Prague, published recently a work entitled *Nejstarší Kronika česká* (the oldest Bohemian chronicle), which has caused great sensation in the learned world of Bohemia. Professor Pekář endeavours to prove that Kristián, also called Strachkvas, brother of the Bohemian duke, Boleslav II, was the author of a chronicle entitled *Life of St. Ludmilla and Martyrdom of St. Wenceslas*. Kristián died in 995, and if it can be proved that he is the author of this chronicle, it

belongs to the tenth century, and is the oldest historical work written in Bohemia and by a Bohemian.

It is unnecessary to refer here in detail to the controversy that has arisen, and it will be sufficient to state that Dr. Pekář has, I think, proved his case. The legend, which has been four times published, firstly in 1677 by the learned Jesuit Balbinus, and lastly by Dr. Pekář two years ago, has great historical value. It contains one of the earliest accounts of the conversion of Moravia to the Christian faith. This is a matter of great importance, as the fact that Bohemia and Moravia first received Christianity from the East, and long maintained a connexion with the East, is strongly urged by Slavic writers and strongly opposed by German historians.

I will quote a portion of Kristián's account. 'It is believed,' he writes, 'and indeed known that Moravia, a Slavic country, early obtained the faith of Christ, but the Bulgarians had long before received that grace; for one Cyrillus, Greek by birth, learned in Latin as well as in Greek writings, after the conversion of the Bulgarians came in the name of the Holy Trinity and the indivisible God to the people of Moravia for the purpose of preaching there also the faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And when he had won them for Christ he, by the grace of God, invented new characters and translated into the Slavonic tongue the Old and New Testaments, as well as other Greek and Latin works. He also decreed that mass and the canonical horary prayers should be read in the vulgar tongue; and this has been continued in Slavic countries up to the present time, whereby many souls have been won for Our Lord Christ.'

I may here incidentally remark that the custom of using the national language in churches continued in Bohemia for a long time, and was revived during the period of the Hussite wars. During the existence of the national church of Bohemia—from about 1420 to 1620—the religious services were always held in the national language.

The chronicle deals principally with the martyrdom of St. Ludmilla, and with the murder of St. Wenceslas—still the patron-saint of Bohemia—by his treacherous younger brother Boleslav. Boleslav had invited his brother to his castle that was situated near the town that still bears the name of Mladá-Boleslav. I will give a short extract from Kristián's account of the murder, as it is the oldest version of the celebrated legend of Wenceslas. After apologizing for the length of his narrative, he writes:—

‘Very great sorrow hath many words, but I will endeavour not to delay long those who desire to know somewhat of the sufferings of the holy martyr.

‘Holy Wenceslas, who was soon to be a victim for the sake of Christ, rose early, wishing, according to his saintly habit, to hurry to the church that he might remain there for some time in solitary prayer before the congregation arrived; and wishing as a good shepherd to hear the matins together with his flock and join in their song, he soon fell into the snares that had been laid; for the priest of this church—one of those from whom this iniquity of Babylon proceeded—according to the commands of the evil ones, closed the gates of the church as soon as he heard the goodly man enter. Then the plotters—that is, his brother and his armed companions—who were prepared, rose up. Then

seeing his brother, this chosen soldier of God thanked him and embracing and kissing him, greeted him, saying, "I salute you, my brother, may you be rich in the goods of this world and of the next, and may Christ admit you to His eternal banquet, you who have yesterday feasted so lavishly me and my followers." Then said Boleslav with proud spirit and fierce eyes, drawing his sword, which he had concealed under his cloak: "That was yesterday according to the circumstances, but this is the cheer which to-day one brother will give to the other." Then brandishing his sword he struck at his brother's head, but through the favour of the Lord he scarcely drew blood; for the horror which he felt at the greatness of his crime was so strong that even when he attacked his brother a second time, he could not carry out his evil intent. Then the Holy Wenceslas endeavoured to seize his bare sword, saying, "How evilly dost thou act by wounding me." But when he saw that he by no means abandoned his evil purpose, he—as some say—seized him and threw him down at his feet, saying, "Behold, thou seest, O man who knowest thyself lost, that I can destroy thee like the meanest of beasts; but never shall the hand of a servant of God be stained with the blood of his brother." Then he returned to his brother the sword that he had taken from him, and with bleeding hands hurriedly proceeded from the church. But the wretched Boleslav followed him, and cried out with a loud voice; "My friends, my friends, where are you? evilly indeed do you aid your lord, and little help do you give him in his trouble." Then the whole band of conspirators rushed from their hiding-place with many swords and spears, and wounding him with

many grievous wounds, killed him at the door of the church. Then this saintly soul departed, victoriously and with the laurels of martyrdom from the prison-house of this world on the fourth day before the calends of October in the year of the incarnation 928, while the world mourned and the heavens rejoiced.'

As I have already mentioned, the exact date of Kristián's chronicle is uncertain. We are on safer ground when dealing with Cosmas of Prague, the Bohemian Herodotus as he was formerly called. Writing in 1125, he tells us that he was then an octogenarian; we may therefore assume that he was born about the year 1045. He began writing late in life, after the death of his wife Božetěcha, and perhaps to solace the sorrow which her loss—to which he alludes in a very feeling manner in his book—caused him. I should here mention that the celibacy of the clergy was only introduced into Bohemia at a late period.

Cosmas, who appears to have been of noble birth, studied for some time at Lüttich or Liège in Belgium, and then took holy orders. He became canon and afterwards dean of the chapter of Prague. In this capacity he accompanied the bishops of Prague on many political missions, and took a considerable part in the politics of his country. Thus he was present at the meeting of the German Diet at Mainz, at which Prince Vratislav of Bohemia received the royal crown. He was also employed on missions in Italy and Hungary. Cosmas writes as a warm Bohemian patriot, and it is curious to meet in the works of a writer of the twelfth century with allusions to the 'arrogance innate in the Teutons, who with incensed haughtiness

despise the Slavs and their language.' Cosmas also tells us that Libussa, the semi-mythical female ruler of Bohemia, stated that it was more likely that a fish should become warm under the ice, than that a Bohemian should agree with a German.

Cosmas's *Chronicon Bohemorum*—written in Latin, as was the book of Kristián—though obviously the work of a man of advanced age, is certainly superior to many similar chronicles which belong to this period. His Latinity, of course judged from the low standpoint of the twelfth century, is fairly good, and it is obvious that Cosmas was a good classical scholar. He frequently quotes Sallustius, Ovid, Virgil, Terence, Lucan, and particularly Horace, who seems to have been a particular favourite. Cosmas was not indeed devoid of the ambition of himself writing Latin verses; thus he ends the second book of his chronicle with these rather rugged lines:

‘Siste gradum, musa,
Chronicis es iam satis usa
Carminе completo
Dic, lector amice, valetō.’

Modern critics have indeed accused Cosmas of attaching more importance to his Latin quotations and to his classical reminiscences than to historical research. This reproach is, I think, unfounded, and the great Bohemian historian Palacký pointed out many years ago that a large mass of original matter gathered from the libraries of various Bohemian monasteries is embodied in the chronicle of Cosmas.

The chronicle is divided into three books, which were certainly written at different times and only afterwards joined together to form one complete work.

This is proved also by the fact that the older MSS. contain a separate dedication of each of the books.

The first book, as was usual with the historians, or rather chroniclers of that period, begins with the deluge. Cosmas, however, somewhat mercifully devotes but little space to this early period and soon devotes his attention to matters that have a more immediate connexion with Bohemia. His account of the arrival of the Čechs in Bohemia is very interesting. It is hardly necessary to mention that they were not the original inhabitants of the country, but that a Celtic and then a Teutonic tribe previously resided in Bohemia. At the time of the migration of the nations, the *Völkervwanderung*, as the Germans call it, the Teutonic tribe of the Marcomanni were replaced by the Slavic tribe of the Čechs, whose previous residence was probably that part of Poland now known as the Austrian province of Galicia. After giving a quaint description of the solitudes of Bohemia—for curiously no record of the pre-Slavic inhabitants of Bohemia seems then to have existed—Cosmas describes the arrival in Bohemia of the Slavs under their eponymous leader Čechus. He states that the Řip (in German Georgsberg), that is mountain of St. George, a high hill near Roudnic overlooking the Elbe, was the site of the first Čech settlement in Bohemia. This statement has since been repeated by numerous Bohemian historians, and it is probably historically correct. I will quote the account of Cosmas; he writes: ‘When the leader of the Čechs entered these solitudes it is uncertain by how many men, seeking spots fit for human dwelling-places, he was accompanied. He surveyed the mountains, the valleys, the wild and the fertile regions, with a sagacious

glance, and, as I think, established the first dwelling-places around the mountain Říp between two rivers, the Eger and the Ultava or Moldau, built the first houses, and gladly placed on the ground the penates which he had carried with him on his shoulders. Then the oldest man, whom the others accompanied as their lord, spake these words to his followers. "O companions, who more than once have remained with me in the depths of the forest, arrest your steps, offer a thank-offering to your penates through whose miraculous protection you have reached this your country that has long been predestined for you. This, then, is the land that I remember often to have promised you, a land subject to no man, full of game and birds, abounding with sweet honey and milk—and as you will perceive yourselves, a dwelling-place which its climate renders pleasurable to inhabit. Here you will be wanting in nothing, for no one will hinder you. But now that this land, so beautiful and so great, is in your hands, reflect as to what will be an appropriate name for the country." Then, as if moved by a divine oracle: "Where could we find a better and more appropriate than if we should call the land also Čechia, as thou our father art called Čechus?" Then their elder moved by this augury began joyfully to embrace the soil, rejoicing that it had received his name; then arising and lifting upward to the stars the palms of his hands he began to speak thus: "Hail, land granted to us by fate and for which we have prayed a thousand times; land that at the time of the deluge wert bereaved of man, preserve us safely as a record for mankind, and multiply our offspring from generation to generation."

It is scarcely necessary to point out what clear traces of the study and imitation of the classics this passage shows. The words 'tendens ad sidera palmas' are taken almost verbally from the *Aeneid*.

In his account of these semi-mythical events Cosmas wisely and conscientiously avoids attempting to define their dates chronologically; his method varies after the year 894, which he gives as the date of the conversion to Christianity of the Bohemian prince Bořivog. Still up to the year 1037, the year with which the first book of Cosmas's chronicle ends, dates are only given occasionally and little reliance can be placed on them. Cosmas indeed admits this at the end of the first book. He states that in the earliest part of his narrative he had relied on but uncertain evidence, but he also declares that should he continue his chronicle he will henceforth only state certain and reliable facts. He writes: 'Up to now I have dealt only with the events of the most ancient times, but as St. Jerome says: "Differently do we narrate the things we have seen, differently those we have heard, and differently again those that we have but imagined"; thus will we now better express what we know better, and henceforth with the aid of God and St. Adalbert we intend to narrate those events which we have either seen, or truthfully gathered from those who have seen them.'

This statement cannot, however, be considered as absolutely correct, at least with regard to the second book in which Palacký, whose *Würdigung der alten böhmischen Geschichtschreiber*—that is to say, appreciation of the ancient historians of Bohemia—is still the standard authority on the subject, has discovered numerous chronological and other errors.

I have already mentioned that the second book begins with the year 1037. It ends with the death, in 1092, of Vratislav II, the first of Bohemia's rulers who bore the title of king.

The third and last book of the chronicle of Cosmas is the most valuable one, as it deals with events many of which occurred during his lifetime and in some of which he himself took part. I choose for quotation Cosmas' account of the murder of the nobles of the Veršovic family. This murder is one of the obscure events in early Bohemian history. The Veršovic family, or rather clan, who appear to have held a semi-independent position, had given offence to the Přemyslide princes who ruled over Bohemia. Prince Svatopluk suspected two of the Veršovic nobles, Vacek and Mutina, of treachery during one of his campaigns. The massacre that was the consequence of this suspicion took place in 1108, during the lifetime of Cosmas, and his very vivid account was no doubt derived from an eye-witness—unless Cosmas, as is quite possible, was himself present at this tragic event.

After stating the causes of the resentment of the princes against the Veršovic lords, and mentioning the warning that Mutina received, Cosmas writes: 'After they (the Veršovic lords) had entered the castle of Vratislar, the prince summoned for the following day a meeting of all the great of the land. After they had met then—as a lion that has been let out of his cage and steps on to the arena, and roaring and with erect mane awaits his prey—thus did Svatopluk enter the council-chamber; he sat down in the middle of the hall on the stone bench near the fireplace—himself more incensed than the fireplace in which burnt a

sevenfold fire. Then, looking around him, he gazed at Mutina with fierce eyes, and then furiously addressed him thus: "Oh, hated race and brood that is detested by the gods, evil sons of Veršovic, household-enemies of our race; will it ever escape my memory how you behaved to my ancestor Jaromir, a prince whom you indeed turned into ridicule, but whose fate is our eternal shame; or shall I forget that your brother Bosý by evil fraud murdered my brother Břetislav, that eminent star in the orbit of princes? What fate also had deserved my brother Bořivoj, who ruled under your control, and obeyed you as if he had been your purchased slave; yet with your innate pride you would not endure even the modesty of that prince, and you vexed me with your cunning councils till I accepted your advice, and sinning against my brother sinned greatly by depriving him of the throne. This indeed grieves me, and will grieve me for ever."

The speech that Cosmas has put into the mouth of Svatopluk is too long to be quoted in its entirety; but I will quote the vivid description of the murder that immediately followed the reproachful speech. Cosmas writes: "There was a confused murmur among the audience, and by their approval they yet further incensed the mind of the prince that was already burning with ire. Then the prince left the hall, after making a secret sign to the executioner—Cosmas calls him "lictor"—who was standing near him, and who was conscious of his intentions. The executioner immediately attacked Mutina, who was unaware of the danger. Oh, wondrous patience of Count Mutina! Two blows did he receive without moving, but when at the third blow he attempted to rise from his seat, his head was

struck off. At the same hour, and in the same hall, Unislav, Domassa, and the two sons of Mutina were captured. Another man, Nevsa, who did not indeed belong to the clan, but who was an intimate friend of Mutina, fled seeing what had happened, and would have escaped from the castle through the shrubs if his red tunic had not caused him to be recognized. He was immediately captured and deprived of sight. And as it often happens that a bloodthirsty wolf rages and murders in the sheep-fold, and does not calm his fury nor desist from slaughter till he has killed all the sheep, thus Svatopluk, already stained with the blood of one man, was now yet more exasperated, and he decreed that the whole clan should, without distinction of age, and without delay, be decapitated. He said to the counts who were standing around him, "He who fulfils my wishes will receive a large weight of gold, but he who kills Bosý (one of the leaders) and his son will receive hundredfold more than the others, and will inherit their estates."

I cannot for want of time translate the account of the great massacre that now ensued; it was one of those sudden outbreaks of fury with which the usually placid and peaceful Slavic race is sometimes seized, and of which the massacre of the Streltsi by Peter the Great and the recent tragedy at Belgrade are later examples.

Before leaving Cosmas I will again draw attention to the great influence which the study of the classics had on him. Thus he speaks of the 'gods,' though the Bohemians had accepted Christianity long before the time of the massacre of the Veršovic; he writes of 'lictors,' and describes the fury of a hungry lion in

a manner which shows that the Roman amphitheatre was in his mind.

The chronicle of Cosmas for a long time enjoyed great popularity in Bohemia, and was indeed for many years the standard authority on the history of the country. It is, therefore, natural that it found many continuators, mostly ecclesiastics who wrote in Latin in a manner similar to that of Cosmas. Such historians were the writers known as the canon of the Vyšehrad, the monk of Sazava, Peter abbot of Zittau, Francis provost of Prague, and many others. Their works have great interest for the student of Bohemian history, but speaking to a wider audience I do not wish to devote to them time that I should rather devote to historians of more general interest.

I should, however, give no faithful account of the historians of Bohemia if I omitted to allude to the so-called chronicle of Dalimil, the first historical work written in the national language. I should here mention that the late Mr. Wratislaw has given an account of Dalimil's chronicle in one of his lectures on the native literature of Bohemia in the fourteenth century, which were delivered as the Ilchester Lectures for the year 1877; I have purposely avoided repeating statements contained in these lectures that will be known to most of those interested in Slavic matters.

It is doubtful who was the author of the chronicle of Dalimil, which has been preserved in several MSS., of which the most important is in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge. It was formerly stated, on the authority of a passage in Hajek's chronicle that was wrongly interpreted, that the book was the work of one 'Dalimil, canon of the church of Boleslav.' Recent

research has only proved that the writer was a layman, and a Bohemian noble belonging probably to the northern districts of the country. From the contents of the chronicle it appears that the author began his work in 1308, and finished it in 1316; of the events from the year 1279 downwards he writes as an eye-witness.

The chronicle of Dalimil has been printed several times. The first edition appeared at Prague in 1620, but was suppressed in the same year, after the battle of the White Mountain, and the subsequent occupation of Prague by Austrian-Spanish troops. The keynote of the chronicle is intense hatred of the Germans, whose warfare with the Slavs has continued almost uninterruptedly from the arrival of the Čechs in Bohemia up to the present day. Dobrovský, one of the forerunners of the Bohemian revival in the nineteenth century, very truly writes: 'At no time was the Bohemian hatred of the Germans so intense as during the period described by Dalimil. His heroes, the Bohemian nobles and knights, are great and brave when they drive the Germans out of their country; weak and powerless are the kings who heed the word of German councillors.'

In the beginning of his chronicle, the writer states that it was his love for his nation that induced him to write, though he was a knight rather than a scholar. 'Of one thing,' he writes, 'I am full sure, that I have my nation much at heart; that has encouraged me in this work; that has impelled me to work.'

I will only quote one passage from the chronicle; it is the one which tells of the marriage of Prince Ulrich to the peasant-maiden Božena. This passage also bears witness to the intense hatred of the Germans which is

so characteristic of the so-called Dalimil; he writes: 'Prince Ulrich was hunting at Postoloprty; it befell that when he rode through a village a peasant-maiden was standing near a stream, barefoot and with bare shoulders. Now the maiden was very beautiful, and had a very bashful manner. Then the prince began to admire her, and immediately he took her as his wife. She bore the name of Božena, and became a noble princess, but the nobles were incensed against the prince because of this marriage. Then the prince said—the nobles listened unwillingly—"Peasants sometimes become nobles, and sometimes sons of nobles become peasants; for inherited silver obtains nobility, and often a poor noble is reduced to peasantry. We all descend from one father, and he ranks as a noble whose father had much silver. And as nobility and peasantry are thus intermingled, Božena shall be my wife. Rather would I entrust myself to a Bohemian peasant-girl than that I should take a German woman as my wife. Every heart clings to its nation, therefore would a German woman favour less my language. A German woman will have German servants. She will teach my children German, hence there would be strife in the nation and the land itself would perish. Lords, you heed not your own advantage when you gird against my marriage."'

I have thought it well to translate this passage, not only because it is characteristic of the innate hatred of the Germans that has always existed in Bohemia, but also because it bears witness to the somewhat democratic views of the ancient Slavs—who in contrast to the Latin and Teutonic races attached little importance to ancestry.

The chronicle of Dalimil ends with the coronation

of King John in 1310, and it is therefore appropriate now to mention the writings of a chronicler who deals principally with the reign of King John—the Don Quixote of Bohemia, as he has been aptly called. I allude to the Latin chronicle of Beneš of Weitmil, a canon of St. Vitus's cathedral at Prague. The chronicle is divided into four books, the first three of which contain the history of Bohemia from 1283 to 1345. The fourth book, which is much more detailed and has little connexion with the first ones, contains accounts of the last campaign and death of King John, and of the events of the reign of King Charles up to 1374. Beneš, indeed, undertook his work by command of the last-named patriotic sovereign, and is stated to have been on terms of friendship with his king. The chronicle of Weitmil formerly enjoyed great fame, and the learned Jesuit Balbinus wrote in the seventeenth century that 'nothing could be more famous, nothing more truthful, than this chronicle.' Palacký, whose *Würdigung der alten böhmischen Geschichtschreiber* is still the standard work on the subject, has somewhat qualified this rather exaggerated praise. He writes that the art of Weitmil as a historian is not superior to that of Cosmas and his continuators, though he certainly wrote of more stirring events than his predecessors.

As being of interest to an English audience, I shall quote part of Weitmil's account of the last campaign and the death of King John. I should, however, mention that Weitmil's account of this famous event differs in some particulars from those of French and English chroniclers, as well as from that of Palacký on which the description of the death of King John which I gave in my *Bohemia, a Historical Sketch* is founded.

Weitmil tells us that the Bohemian king declared for immediate battle and was opposed by the French, while most accounts state that through the influence of the Duke of Alençon the French resolved to give battle immediately, while King John, who had sent one of his knights to reconnoitre the English position, advised delay. All who know how very contradictory the accounts even of recent battles are, will appreciate the difficulty of forming an opinion with regard to a battle fought in 1346. In any case the account of a contemporary writer is interesting.

Weitmil writes: 'At this time the King of England, having collected a very large army, began to devastate the lands of the King of France, and hostilely measured out his camp before the city of Paris. Then the King of France, unable to resist him, sent messengers to John King of Bohemia and his son Charles king-elect of the Germans, who were then at Luxemburg. He earnestly begged them immediately to come to his aid with all the men they could collect, for there was no time to lose and peril in all delay. Then the King of Bohemia, collecting a large number of warriors, set out with his son, the king-elect of the Germans, to aid the King of France.

'The King of England, hearing of their arrival, retreated with his men and took up a very strong position between rivers and woods, so that no one could in any way harm him. But King John and his son, the king-elect of the Germans, were not content that the enemies had fled before their faces. Though the King of France objected and spoke against it, they pursued the enemies to their strong position and formed in battle-array, prepared to war against the

English. But the French marshal and his men, seeing that the English were prepared to resist, turned their backs and began basely to fly. When it was told to King John that the French were flying, and he was entreated himself also to seek in flight the safety of his life and that of his men, he said: "God forbid that a King of Bohemia should fly; rather lead me there where the battle is raging most fiercely. The Lord be with us; *we* fear nothing, but watch carefully over my son." When he had been led to the battlefield King John, struck by many arrows, was killed, and many Bohemian nobles who were with him on August 26.

'When some of the other nobles saw that King John had fallen in battle and was dead, then fearing to lose both their princes they led his son Lord Charles, the king-elect (who was fighting fiercely in the front rank and had already been struck by several arrows) out of the battle, though he was reluctant and resisted them; they then conducted him to a safe spot.

'When the battle was ended and the King of England heard that King John had fallen, he caused his body to be searched for; and when it had been found he solemnly, and with many tears, took part in the funeral. He then delivered the body to his countrymen, saying: "The crown of chivalry has fallen to-day. Never was any one equal to this King of Bohemia." The knights then took up the royal corpse and carried it to Luxemburg, where it was buried in St. Mary's church of the Benedictine Order.'

Though, as we have just seen, Charles I of Bohemia—better known as the German emperor Charles IV—was a valiant warrior, yet it is as a patron of art and literature that he is best known to his Bohemian countrymen.

Charles particularly encouraged the study of history, not only by the patronage which he granted to historians. Of the historians of the time Beneš of Weitmil, of whom I have already spoken, was most in touch with the king, but we find that he afforded his protection also to many of the writers known as the continuators of Cosmas. Thus we are told that Charles in 1333 visited, on his return from Italy, abbot Peter of Zittau, perhaps the best of the continuators of Cosmas; and that Francis of Prague, a younger contemporary of Peter, endeavoured to ingratiate himself with the king by dedicating to him a new version of his chronicle. Charles, very much to his credit, declined these overtures, for Francis had in his chronicle written very severely of John the father of King Charles. The financial difficulties of King John had induced him to levy large contributions from the churches and monasteries of Bohemia. Such high-handed proceedings were naturally distasteful to a dignitary of the Church such as was Francis.

Other historians with whom Charles was in communication were Neplach, abbot of Opatovic, who accompanied the sovereign on some of his travels, and Přebík of Radenin, commonly known as Pulkava. The last-named deserves a short mention. His personality was long in dispute, and it was even suggested that the chronicle that goes by his name was written by King Charles, and that Pulkava merely translated it into Bohemian from the original Latin.

The careful researches of Palacký, and more recently of Dr. Tomek, have proved that the writer of the chronicle was Přebík Pulkava, originally a layman and rector of the collegiate school of St. Giles at Prague,

who took orders late in life, became rector of the parish of Chudenic, and died in 1380. Though Pulkava's chronicle is certainly not a work of Charles, it is equally certain that that sovereign—to use a modern expression—‘inspired’ the book. As a proof of the intimacy } between Pulkava and his sovereign, it should also be mentioned that he translated the king's autobiography—to which I shall presently refer—immediately after it was written.

Pulkava's chronicle, like those of most of his contemporaries, begins with the deluge; and he gives a very curious account, obviously founded on very ancient traditions, of the travels of the Slavs from the land of Senaar through Greece and Turkey to their European dwelling-places. The arrival of the Čechs at the Říp mountain is described in a manner similar to the account of Cosmas which I have already quoted.

I have already mentioned that Pulkava translated into Bohemian the *Vita Caroli*, the autobiography of Charles, Emperor of the Germans and King of Bohemia. I will now refer to this work, that is perhaps more interesting because of the personality of its author than because of its historical value. The book has been little noticed by historians. The strong Bohemian patriotism of Charles has always rendered him invidious to German writers, and the name of ‘Pfaffenkaiser’ (‘emperor of the priests’) which they have given him has been adopted by other historians also. The imputation insinuated by this name is but partly founded. It is true that the nature of Charles was superstitious, ✓ or rather mystical. He thoroughly believed in visions and apparitions, and constantly refers to them in his book. His devotion to relics was as great as that of

Louis XI, though there is fortunately no other similarity between the Bohemian sovereign and the King of France. The complete list of the relics which Charles presented to the various churches of Bohemia fills six folio pages in the work of the learned Jesuit Balbinus.

On the other hand, it is but just to state that Charles was by no means lenient to the evil ways of the Bohemian clergy nor always so subservient to papal authority, as his nickname would appear to indicate. At the Imperial Diet held at Mainz in 1357, Charles strongly opposed the claims of the papal legate who demanded that a tithe for the papal court should be collected from the German clergy. On the same occasion Charles also requested the bishops to be more attentive to the morals and conduct of their clergy, and even threatened to seize the ecclesiastical revenues, should they not be more worthily employed. It is also a proof of the independent mind of Charles that he granted his protection to the mystical Bohemian Church reformer Milič, who not only severely blamed the terrible immorality of the Bohemian clergy, but even in dogmatic matters differed from the Church of Rome.

If we consider the great personality of its author, the *Vita Caroli* is a somewhat disappointing book. As Dr. Friedjung, who has written an able though somewhat one-sided life of Charles, states, it is mainly a description of the *Lehrjahre* (learning-years) of the prince; for Charles's autobiography ends with the year 1346. The book can be divided into two parts. The first, in which Charles writes of himself in the first person, contains reminiscences of his early youth up to the year 1340. The second, which is very short, and in which Charles writes of himself in the third person,

carries on the narrative up to 1346, and ends with the election of Charles as King of the Romans. The fact that these two parts differ in many ways has led some to conjecture that the first part only is the work of Charles, and that some other writer—the name of Beneš of Weitmil has been suggested—had continued the narrative. The best and most recent Bohemian authorities oppose this view. The earlier part of Charles's book is obviously founded on a diary, and it is possible that when writing the latter part Charles may have sought the advice of some of the chroniclers, whom his passionate interest in history had induced him to invite to his court. Yet the whole book is substantially the prince's own work, and it is hardly necessary to mention that from Julius Caesar downward many autobiographers have written in the third person. Towards the end of his book Charles mentions that he had intended to continue his memoirs—for thus the book is perhaps most fitly described—to a further period. The pressure of work when Charles became King of the Romans, then German Emperor, and after his father's death King of Bohemia, no doubt prevented him from carrying out this plan. Charles dedicated his book to his sons, who were to succeed him 'on the twofold thrones,' as he himself words it. I will quote a few lines from the introduction. Addressing his successors, Charles writes: 'When after me you will reign adorned with the diadem of kings, remember that I also reigned before you, and that I was then reduced to dust and the mire of worms. Thus will you also flit like a shadow and fall as the vanishing flowers of the field. What value has nobility and abundance of possessions, unless you have also a pure conscience with the true faith and

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the hope of a holy resurrection? Do not value your lives, as do the impious who think evilly; how little is that which you are, for you were created and formed by God out of nothing, and later you will return to nothing as if you had never been.'

Somewhat later in the introduction Charles writes: 'For you, my successors, I have carefully written these words, founded on wisdom and the fear of God, as far as by divine help my feeble power has rendered me capable of doing so. I wish now to write to you of my vain and foolish life (*de vana et stulta vita mea*), and of the beginning of my passage through this world, that these writings may furnish you an example; nor will I pass in silence the grace granted me by God and that love of study which I have tenaciously preserved in my heart. You may all the more hope for divine aid in your labours, because your fathers and predecessors have well instructed you.'

Of the autobiography of Charles, the earliest parts which deal with the Italian campaign, in which he figured as a leader at the age of seventeen, are the most picturesque. King John, whose warlike ardour induced him to court adventures in all parts of Europe, had, during a visit to the Tyrol, interfered in a quarrel between the citizens of Brescia and Mastino della Scala, lord of Verona, who endeavoured to subject Brescia also to his rule. In 1330, John, who was accompanied by his son Charles, entered Brescia and was enthusiastically received by the citizens. No doubt largely in consequence of the chivalrous personality of King John, numerous Italian cities, such as Bergamo, Cremona, Parma, Modena, and others, accepted him as their ruler; and even the powerful Azzo de Visconti,

lord of Milan, recognized the supremacy of the King of Bohemia. This very short rule of Bohemia—or rather the House of Luxemburg, for it was based on dynastic, not racial motives—in Italy has been very much neglected by historians. John himself indeed recrossed the Alps in the Spring of 1331, but he left in Italy, as his representative, his son Charles, then only seventeen years of age. There is no doubt that Charles then began to keep the diary which is the foundation of the *Vita Caroli*. Charles had established his rule in the city of Parma, one of those that remained longest faithful to the Bohemian dynasty. Though Charles defeated in the great battle of Sanfelice the forces of the Italian cities, yet the Bohemian rule in Italy collapsed as suddenly as it had arisen, and Charles left Italy before the end of the year 1333. This part of the autobiography is most striking. With the enthusiasm of youth Charles describes the details of his Italian warfare, and his frequent accounts of his visions and of apparitions render his narrative often very picturesque.

Of Bohemian affairs Charles's memoirs deal but scantily, and without that thorough understanding of the country which he afterwards acquired. He indeed tells us that it was only on his return from Italy that he thoroughly mastered the national language, and, as he writes, 'spoke as the other Bohemians.'

One of the most interesting parts of Charles's autobiography is his account of his visit to Avignon. He and his father visited Pope Benedict, and Charles also had an interview with his former tutor Pierre Roget, who afterwards became Pope under the name of Clement VI. Charles writes: 'Now when our father's health did not improve, we went with him to Avignon' 2/

to Pope Benedict XII, to negotiate with him concerning the Peter's Pence that were to be paid in the diocese of Vratislav¹, but the negotiations were not then successful and the strife might have continued. Afterwards, however, the dispute between the Roman Church and the bishopric was settled.'

Somewhat later, Charles writes: 'Now at the time when we were with the Pope, one Peter, Abbot of Fécamp, born in the diocese of Limoges, who had been first Bishop of Arras, then Archbishop, first of Sens and then of Rouen, was cardinal-bishop. He was also a member of the Council of King Philip, before whom he celebrated Mass on the day of ashes. He received me, who during my stay at the Court of Pope Benedict bore the title of Marquis of Moravia, in his house, and one day when we were in his house he said to me, "Thou wilt yet be King of the Romans." To this I answered, "Thou wilt before that be Pope." Both these facts afterwards occurred.'

Dr. Friedjung, the biographer of Charles, justly regrets that he should have given so short an account of this memorable interview, while he gives a detailed account of the questions concerning his visions which he addressed to the future Pope Clement VI.

Charles died in 1378, and his death forms a very important landmark in the history of Bohemia. Almost simultaneously with his death the great schism in the Western Church broke. In the movement in favour of Church reform, which was an indirect consequence of the schism, Bohemia played a very prominent part. I shall in my next lecture deal with the historians of the Hussite period.

¹ In German, Breslau.

II

IT is deeply to be regretted that we possess comparatively scanty records of the history of Bohemia during the period of the Hussite wars, the period on which Bohemia's claim to historical fame principally depends. It is against the works dealing with this period that the terrible destruction of books instituted by the Jesuits was principally directed. It is only recently that it has been attempted to collect and edit the contemporary records of the Hussite wars.

The great historian Palacký has ably pointed out the difficulties that beset those who attempted this task, thus refuting the foolish fables—derived from German or Roman sources—that had hitherto done duty as a history of the Hussite wars. For political reasons—into which I do not wish to enter here—the Austrian Government considered it desirable that these traditions which described the Hussites as brutal and cruel fanatics, enemies of all order in Church and State, should remain in vigour. This utterly false view has adherents up to the present day, and it is only a few years ago that a member of one of the greatest Bohemian families—though not of one of those which dwelt in the country during the period of independence—declared in the parliament of Prague that he and his adherents saw in the Hussites not noble heroes, but a gang of robbers and incendiaries, the communists of the fifteenth century. Hus, the speaker continued,

must be considered the cause of a complete revolution. The Reformation was a misfortune for Europe. Among the Hussites there were few men of moral and honourable character.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to state before the ~~present audience that the Hussite movement was at first an entirely religious one.~~ The Hussites did not, indeed, at first lay much stress on dogmatic distinctions, but they principally strove to reform the discipline and morality of the Bohemian clergy, which had sunk to a level that it is almost impossible to imagine at the present day.

The repeated invasions of Bohemia by savage hordes collected from all parts of Europe, necessarily obliged the Bohemians to defend their country, which indeed they successfully did. Mediaeval warfare of course was accompanied by horrible cruelties, but it has been successfully proved by Palacký that the atrocities committed by the Romanist invaders of Bohemia—who wished to exterminate the whole population, as had once been done with the Albigenses—were in every way greater and more terrible than the reprisals of the Bohemians.

The period of the Hussite wars so greatly exceeds in interest every other epoch of the Bohemian history, that I shall devote to a notice of the writings dealing with this stirring time more notice than is justified by the number of those writings which have been preserved. I shall then briefly refer to the later historians up to the year 1526—an important date, for it marks the accession of the House of Habsburg and the beginning of the Romanist reaction.

The first historian whom I shall mention is Peter of

Mladenovič, the biographer of Hus, whom he accompanied on his fatal journey to Constance. Mladenovič took part in this voyage as writer—or, as we should say, secretary—of Lord John of Chlum, one of the Bohemian nobles to whom the Emperor Sigismund had entrusted the task of conducting Hus safely to Constance and watching over his safety there. Mladenovič was present during the whole trial and the condemnation of Hus, and after the death of the martyr returned to Bohemia, where he became a prominent member of the moderate, or, as it was called, the Calixtine fraction of the Hussite Church. Mladenovič has left a detailed Latin account¹ of Hus's journey to Constance and his imprisonment. This book is the foundation of all records of the last days of Hus that can lay claim to any authenticity. It was edited and published by Palacký in the nineteenth century, and was very little known previously. This accounts for the fact that many totally groundless anecdotes referring to the death of the great Bohemian were circulated and frequently repeated by English as well as by Continental writers; thus it was said that an old woman had collected faggots for the stake of Hus, that Hus had before dying predicted the advent of Luther, and so forth. These unauthenticated tales are not found in the contemporary narrative of Mladenovič. Mladenovič, who has also left a short Bohemian account of the martyrdom of Hus, writes very plainly and with scarcely more grace of style than the early chroniclers of his country. He himself admits this in somewhat touching words, which I shall quote presently.

¹ Entitled *Relatio de Magistri J. Hus causa.*

I will give a short extract from Mladenovič's account of the stay of Hus and his companions at Nuremberg, the city to which they first proceeded after crossing the frontier of their country. Mladenovič writes: 'When he (Hus) arrived at Nuremberg, on the sixth day after St. Gallus¹ with the lords whom I have mentioned, and they were dining, one Albertus, who was, I think, parish priest of St. Sebaldus, came saying that he wished to discourse amicably with them. When Hus consented, several masters came, one of whom was a doctor of divinity, as well as many town councillors of the city of Nuremberg. They discussed for four hours with the master (i.e. Hus) on all current affairs with regard to which the name of the master had been mentioned. When they had conferred on all these matters, they said: "Truly, master, that which we have heard is Catholic doctrine; we have for many years held and taught these same things, and we still hold them and believe in them; if there is nothing else against you, you will come away from the council and return with all honour." And then with a favourable opinion they all left together.'

This passage is very important, as proving that Hus was at that time by no means considered by the Germans as an enemy of their nation; no one indeed was less a hater than Hus, who, when imprisoned in a cruel dungeon, repeatedly stated that he forgave all his enemies. The true instigators of the murder of Hus were enemies who were his own countrymen—an occurrence that unhappily has been frequent in Bohemian history. Hus's doctrine of the poverty of the clergy was naturally most obnoxious to the wealthy

¹ The nineteenth of October.

and worldly Bohemian Church dignitaries, of whom he has in his *Postilla* given us so biting and impressive an account. It was these men, headed by John (sur-named the 'Iron') Bishop of Litomyšl, who persuaded Sigismund to break his word; they were aided by some of the inferior clergy of Bohemia, men who had formerly been friends of Hus, and who now exhausted all means of ingenuity and spite for the purpose of misrepresenting the words of their former friend.

Want of time obliges me to quote from the record of Mladenovič less extensively than I should have wished. My regret is, however, tempered by the consideration that two recent English writers, the late Mr. Wratislaw and the late Bishop Creighton, have quoted extensively from the book of Peter of Mladenovič. I will, however, quote a portion of his last chapter, which is entitled 'The last days of that holy and reverend man, master John Hus, and his passion which he meekly endured.' I must, of course, abridge the very detailed narrative. After describing the judgement passed on Hus in the cathedral of Constance on July 6, 1415, Mladenovič writes: 'When the judgement, as stated above, had been delivered, then Hus with bended knees prayed in a loud voice for all his enemies, saying: "Lord Jesus Christ, I beg of Thee to forgive all my enemies because of Thy great mercy. Thou knowest that they have falsely accused me, brought forward false witnesses against me, drawn up false indictments against me. Forgive them because of Thy immense mercy!" When he had said this, many particularly of the most prominent ecclesiastics looked indignantly at him and began to scoff at him.'

Mladenovič then describes how the ignominious cere-

monies of ecclesiastical degradation and deconsecration were performed on Hus, and how he was led to the 'place of torment,' which was in a field among gardens beyond the walls and fortifications of the city. 'When he was led forth,' Mladenovič writes, 'some laymen who were standing near said: "We know not what this man has done or said previously, but now we see and hear that he prays and says holy words"; and others said: "Verily it were well that he should have a confessor and be heard." But a priest who was riding near, clad in a green doublet lined with red silk, said: "He may not be heard, nor may a confessor be granted to him, for he is a heretic."' "

When Hus arrived at the spot of his martyrdom, Mladenovič tells us: 'He prayed with a loud voice, "Lord Jesus Christ, I will bear patiently and humbly this horrible, shameful, and cruel death, for the sake of Thy gospel and the preaching of Thy truth." When he was led past the spectators he addressed them, begging them not to believe that he had ever held, preached, or taught, the tenets that had been attributed to him by false witnesses. He was then stripped of his clothes and tied with cords to a stake, and his arms were turned backward to the stake. When his face was at first turned to the East, some of the spectators said: "Let him not be turned to the East, for he is a heretic, but to the West," and it was done thus. When a rusty chain was placed round his neck he said, smiling to the lictors [Mladenovič thus designates the soldiers or town-officials], "Our Lord Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, was bound with a harder and heavier chain, and I, a poor wretch, do not fear to be bound with this chain for His sake." Now the stake consisted of

a thick pole which they had sharpened at one end and driven into the ground in this field; under the feet of the master they placed two faggots and some loads of wood. When attached to the stake he retained his boots, as his feet were fettered with a chain. They then heaped up round his body these wooden faggots mixed with straw, so that they reached up to his chin.'

Mladenovič then mentions the last attempt of the Imperial marshal, Happe of Pappenheim, to induce Hus to retract his teaching, and then thus describes the execution: 'When the lictors lighted the pile the master first sang with a loud voice, "Christ, son of the living God, have mercy on us," and then again, "Christ, son of the living God, have mercy on me." When a third time he began singing, "Who art born of the Virgin Mary," the wind soon blew the flames into his face; then still silently praying and moving his lips and head, he expired in the Lord. The space of time during which, after becoming silent, he still moved before dying, was that required to recite two, or at the utmost three, Paternosters.'

Mladenovič then tells us that the earthly remains of Hus were thrown into the Rhine, that his garments, to which the executioners had a traditional claim, were also destroyed, 'lest the Bohemians should consider them as relics,' and that the executioners were compensated.

Mladenovič finishes his account of the death of Hus, and at the same time his book, with the following words: 'I have written in a very plain manner this account of the famed master John Hus, his death and his agony, which in the course of time have ever more vividly been recalled to my memory; for I considered that

I ought not by the ornamented composition of painted words to deprive my narrative of its kernel, while the sound of my words caressed the ears of my audience; rather did I think that I should truthfully record the pith of the matter, the order of the events of which I had knowledge, both by eyesight and by the testimony of one who knew of these events—telling no untruths and admitting even the simplicity of plain words.'

As both the friends and the enemies of Hus foresaw, the death of the great Bohemian was the signal of a general uprising in Bohemia. Though I should be straying from my subject if I entered more closely into this matter, I should yet point out that even in accordance with the rough and cruel laws of those days, the execution of Hus was a judicial murder. In Bohemia it was felt as an insult to the whole nation, and the Hussite wars were inevitable.

Though the record of Hus is, I think, pretty well known in England, great ignorance I believe prevails with regard to the Hussite wars. It is one of the many merits of the great historian Palacký, who here, as elsewhere, has been the pioneer of modern historical research in Bohemia, that he has drawn attention to the great importance of the Hussite wars. Had not the genius of generals, such as Žižka and Prokop the Great, enabled the Bohemians to beat back the forces of all Europe in arms against the country, the establishment in Bohemia of a national Church which amid various vicissitudes lasted for nearly two centuries, would have been impossible. Hus himself, indeed, would have figured in history only as an isolated enthusiast like Savonarola.

Of the historians of the Hussite wars undoubtedly the greatest was Lawrence of Březov. The learned Professor Goll, in his able introduction to his recent edition of Březov's history, lays great stress on this superiority. Yet the name of Březov, like that of so many Bohemian historians, was almost unknown up to the middle of the last century. It is true that in Ludewig's *Reliquiae*, published at Halle and Frankfurt in 1720, we find¹ the name of one Byzynyus, who is mentioned as the author of a *Diarium Hussiticum*, but it is not without difficulty that we ascertain that the person referred to is Lawrence of Březov. The researches of Palacký, and more recently of Professor Goll, however, throw considerable light on the personality of the foremost historian of the Hussite wars. According to Professor Goll, Březov was born in 1370, as a member of an ancient noble family of Bohemia, and in 1394 obtained the rank of Master of Arts at the university of Prague. Previously (in 1391) he had through the favour of Queen Sophia, wife of Wenceslas IV of Bohemia, obtained permission to hold an ecclesiastical benefice, though he had not yet reached the appointed age. As Professor Goll remarks, the revenue appeared to him most important, for he had no intention of formally entering the ecclesiastical state. Březov evidently enjoyed great favour at the court of King Wenceslas, and according to a very probable conjecture held the office of secretary or chancellor to the king.

Besides his great historical work which is written in Latin, and a rhymed chronicle celebrating the important victory of the Bohemians at Domažlice (Taus)

¹ Tom. vi, p. 435.

which is in the same language, Březov also wrote works in his native tongue. Thus he wrote in Bohemian an *Interpretation of Dreams*, no doubt intended to please the not very cultivated taste of his patron King Wenceslas, and a *Chronicle of the World*, parts of which have been preserved in MS. He also translated into Bohemian the *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, from a German version by Otto of Daymark.

But the most important work of Březov is his ~~chronicle of the Hussite wars; unfortunately it deals only with a portion of that stirring epoch in the annals of Bohemia; he begins his work with the introduction into Bohemia of communion in the two kinds in 1414, a few months before the death of Hus. This is an event of great importance, as it signified the secession of Bohemia from the Western Church. The book breaks off quite abruptly at the year 1421. It appears probable that Březov, of whom the last contemporary mention dates from the year 1436, wrote the book late in life, and that death overtook him while working at his history. It is certain—as Dr. Goll has skilfully proved—that the book was not written immediately after the occurrence of the events which it describes. On the other hand, the hatred and contempt with which Lawrence invariably speaks of Sigismund—‘the Hungarian king,’ as he always calls him—render it improbable that his book was written in or immediately before the year 1436, at which time Sigismund was, though somewhat reluctantly, almost universally accepted as king by the Bohemian people.~~

~~Lawrence of Březov writes as a thorough Calixtine, that is to say, as a member of the more moderate section of the Bohemian Church. He is equally opposed~~

to the Romanists and to the extreme or Taborite section of the Hussite party. As Palacký has pointed out in his note on Březov, that historian is often unfair to the Taborites, and this is the more to be regretted as all their own records have perished. He has to an undue extent impressed on the Taborite leaders the stigma of cruelty, though cruelties were committed by all parties during the Bohemian religious wars of the fifteenth century.

The introduction to the chronicle gives insight into the opinions and views of the prominent Bohemians during the period of the Hussite wars. Březov writes: 'When I contemplate the present vast ruin and the calamities of the once happy and famed Bohemian kingdom, which is devastated and destroyed by the discord of internal strife, then my understanding becomes dull, and my mind bewildered by sorrow lacks the vigour of intellect; yet that the posterity of the Bohemian race may not lack a record of this terrible and indeed prodigious catastrophe, and may not through perverse idleness again encounter such or similar misfortunes—moved also by the desire of preserving the memory of what I perceived with truthful eyes and ears, I have in the present pages recorded these facts in writing.'

Dr. Goll, whose introduction to his edition of Březov is a masterpiece of historical criticism, justly remarks that these words could not have been written during the glow of triumph that immediately followed the great Bohemian victories, but rather at a time when the evils of even successful civil war became apparent. Dr. Goll is, however, no doubt right in conjecturing that Březov took notes at the time of the events he described;

the intense vivacity of some of his battle-pieces, which, if I may be permitted a vile anachronism, appear as photographic snapshots before our eyes, bears witness to this.

Březov deals in a rather cursory manner with the events of the years 1414 to 1419, and it is only of the events of the period which begins in 1419 and ends in 1421 that he gives us a detailed and moving account. It should be noted that these two years, as regards their importance, may well count for two centuries in the history of Bohemia. The victory on Žižka's Hill was the first successful fight for liberty in the Middle Ages. The success of these armed bands of citizens and peasants against half the nobility of Europe and their countless followers, found an echo in all countries and produced a democratic movement which has been little noticed, and to which it is of course not my purpose to refer here.

I will now quote part of Březov's account of the siege of Prague by Sigismund in 1420, and of the subsequent Hussite victories in the two battles near Prague—that of the Žižkov and that of the Vyšehrad. Březov writes: 'On the thirtieth of June, which was the Sunday nearest to the feast of St. Peter the Martyr, the Hungarian King Sigismund approached the [Hradčany] castle¹ of Prague with a large army, consisting both of Bohemians and of men of foreign nations. After mass had been said, the king himself with some of his principal followers was solemnly received at the gates of the castle by the clergy, who then followed him in procession amidst the ringing of bells and the

¹ By the name of the castle of Prague Březov always designates the Hradčany castle, not the older acropolis on the Vyšehrad.

singing of canticles and hymns. Meanwhile his army was encamped on the plain between Bruska and Ovenec ; it was intent on capturing Prague, which they considered a heretical city because of its holy communion by means of the chalice and its faith in the gospel. To this camping-ground many and manifold men flocked daily from all parts of the world, duchies, provinces, and districts, because of the crusade which the Pope had proclaimed against the Bohemians, principally because they received communion in the two kinds. They all came for the purpose of capturing the glorious and magnificent city of Prague, hoping that by thus destroying and frustrating communion in the two kinds, they would obtain remission of their sins and penalties ; for the priests had falsely promised them this, thus in various ways inciting them to murder all faithful Bohemians of both sexes.

‘ Now in this army, which consisted of a multitude of more than 150,000 men, there were archbishops, bishops, the patriarch of Aquileja, doctors of divinity and other spiritual dignitaries, secular dukes and princes, about forty in number, many marquises, counts, barons, and nobles, and so many soldiers and camp-followers that they covered the whole vast plain, and their magnificent tents and encampments appeared as three vast cities. There were here men of various nations, tribes, and tongues, Bohemians and Moravians, Hungarians and Croatians, Dalmatians, Bulgarians, Wallachians, Ruthenians [Racians], Slavonians, Servians, Prussians, Thuringians, Styrians, men of Meissen, Bavarians, Saxons, Austrians, men of Franconia, Frenchmen, Englishmen, men of Brabant and Westphalia, Dutchmen, Switzers, Lusatians, Suabians, Carinthians, Ara-

gonians, Spaniards, Poles, Germans from the Rhineland, and many others. These men stood on the tops of the hills on the side of the river which is opposite the monastery of the Holy Cross [and the church of St. Valentine], and, howling like dogs, threatened the city daily, saying: "Ha, Ha, Hus, Hus, Heretics, Heretics!" and if any Bohemian fell into their hands—unless he was promptly rescued by the Bohemians who were on their side—they immediately burnt him mercilessly, even if he had never received communion in the two kinds.'

Březov then tells us how Žižka and his Taborites, who, sinking all minor differences, had hastened to the aid of Prague, fortified the hill then known as the Vitkov, but which henceforth was always known as the Žižkov or Žižka's Hill. They thus secured for the party of Church reform communication with the open country, where the peasants were everywhere rising in arms against the German and other invaders, while many Bohemian knights who sympathized with the Hussite doctrine were also hastening to take part in the defence of the venerated capital of Bohemia.

The Germans, Hungarians, and other allies of Sigismund finally decided that a general attack on the city should be made on July 14. Březov writes: 'On the Sunday nearest to the feast of St. Marguerite the whole royal army was ready. It was decided that one part of it, a few thousand men, should first seize the wooden fortifications that Žižka had erected on the hill. When this had been done three attacks were, according to the instructions of the captains, to be made on the city. From the castle¹ the Bohemian troops of

¹ The Hradčany.

Sigismund were to attack the Saxon house¹; other columns were to attack the new town from the Vyšehrad, and the old town from the Spital field².

Of the attack on the Žižkov, Březov writes: 'The men of Meissen with their seven or eight thousand horsemen ascended the hill with much clatter and the sound of trumpets, and they occupied the wooden forts and the small tower in the vineyards. When they attempted to scale the wall that had been constructed out of earth and stones, two women and one girl, and with them about twenty-six men who had remained in the earthwork, manfully defended themselves with stones and spears, for they had neither arrows nor firearms. One of these women, though unarmed, surpassed the men in courage, and would not retire from her post. "It is not becoming," she said, "that a faithful Christian should give way to Antichrist." Thus fighting bravely, she was killed and gave up the ghost. Žižka, who hurried to the spot, would himself have been slain had not his men with their fighting-clubs delivered him from the hands of the enemies. Now while the whole city feared its ruin, and all were with their children praying tearfully and placing their hopes in heaven alone, a priest came to the hill carrying the body of Christ in the sacrament, and behind him followed about forty bowmen and some peasants who were not in armour, but carried their fighting-flails.

'The enemies seeing the sacrament, hearing the tolling of the bells and the loud cries of the people, were

¹ A building on the left bank of the Vltava, near the bridge of Prague.

² At that time an open space on the site of the present Karlín or Karolinenthal suburb of Prague.

seized by sudden fear, turned their backs and fled hastily, each man striving to outpace the other. In this sudden rush many were not able to control their horses, and falling from the high rocks broke their necks, while many were killed by the pursuers; thus in less than an hour's time more than four hundred men were either killed, or mortally wounded, or led forth as prisoners. After this the king with his army silently returned to his encampments overwhelmed with fury, disgust, lament and sorrow. But the men of Prague, kneeling down in the Spital field, rendered thanks to God, intoning the *Te Deum laudamus* with loud voices; for they knew that not through their own valour but miraculously God had granted their small number victory over their enemies. Then with hymns and songs they joyfully returned to the city, and then the music turned to delight, the sorrow of the women, virgins, and children to rejoicing and gladness,—all of whom the enemies of the truth had intended mercilessly and cruelly to murder as heretics and children of heretics; and all praised the mercy of God, who had powerfully delivered them from the hands of their cruel enemies.'

The pages of Březov's book that deal with the events at Prague and the battles that were fought around the city are so stirring, that it is with real reluctance that I refrain from quoting from them more copiously than time will now permit me. The victory of the Žižkov induced Sigismund the Hungarian king to abandon the siege of Prague. After some futile negotiations he for a time left the neighbourhood of the capital, while the vast forces of the crusaders dispersed to their various countries. The troops of Sigismund continued, however, to hold the royal castles

of the Hradčany and of the Vyšehrad. In the autumn of the year 1420, the Hussites began to besiege the Vyšehrad, and Sigismund, wishing to relieve the garrison, again approached the city of Prague. The result of these movements was the battle of St. Pankrace or of the Vyšehrad, fought on November 2, which the men of Prague justly considered as their crowning mercy; for the defeat that they here inflicted on Sigismund freed the Bohemians from his rule for a considerable period, while the leading part that the citizens of Prague had taken in this campaign obtained for their town a temporary hegemony over almost all Bohemia. I can quote only a small portion of Březov's account of this great victory. After enumerating the forces of Prague, of the Utraquist nobles, and of the men of some of the Hussite towns who together formed the besieging army, Březov writes: 'Thus the Vyšehrad was encircled in every direction, so that provisions could not be brought into the castle either by any footpath or by means of carts. Not a little terrified, the men on the Vyšehrad wrote to King Sigismund begging for provisions, of which, they said, they had great lack. The king in his haughtiness promised to give them abundance of provisions and to drive back the citizens of Prague; in truth he did nothing for five weeks, and for three weeks they were obliged to feed on the flesh of horses.'

After some fruitless attempts to revictual the Vyšehrad by means of boats on the Vltava, Sigismund at last decided to give battle to relieve the garrison, which had already agreed to capitulate if they did not receive provisions within a certain time. Sigismund had not this time a cosmopolitan army at his disposal.

His army consisted principally of the knights and nobles of Moravia ; of these many were themselves partisans of Church reform, but their dynastic or rather feudal feelings overcame all other considerations, and they bravely though reluctantly rallied round the standard of the king. Of the battle of the Vyšehrad, Březov writes: 'On the vigil of the day of All Saints the king arrived at midday at the new castle of Kunratic, but he was afraid of attacking on that day, as he expected further levies from the Moravian lords. These men arrived towards evening, and slept in armour in the woods, that all should be ready on the following day to drive from the field the Praguers and their allies. During the night the king sent a messenger to his mercenaries in the castle of Prague¹, ordering them to be under arms early in the morning, and descending from the castle to attack the Saxon house and the bridge-tower and if possible to burn them ; the king himself would at the same hour drive the Praguers from the field, as he had received large reinforcements.

'But God, who resists the haughty and is gracious to the humble, decreed that the messenger with his letter fell into the hands of the men of Prague, who were warned by the tenor of the king's letter and learnt all his plans. Therefore the commanders of the Praguers vigilantly gave instructions to the people, decreeing what post each leader with his men was to hold and bravely defend on the morrow. Then it befell that, when the fifteenth hour had passed, the king with from fifteen to twenty well-armed men left the new castle and approached the spot where the men of Prague lay ; then, standing on the top of a height opposite

¹ That is to say, the Hradčany.

the church of St. Pankrace, he drew his sword and waved it in the air, thus calling on the garrison of the Vyšehrad to make a sortie against the Praguers, because he with a large force, which they could not see, was also preparing to attack the men of Prague.

‘But as the king had by the grace of God missed the time fixed by the agreement¹, the captains of the Vyšehrad secured the gates of the citadel, allowing no one to attack the city of Prague, though some of the men who were Germans wished to do so. The nobles in the royal army, seeing that the men of the Vyšehrad did not intend to help the king, and that the Praguers were strongly entrenched, advised him to desist from the attack on Prague; he would thus avert great damage from his army. But the king said: “Avaunt from me. I must assuredly fight with these peasants to-day.” Then Lord Henry of Plumlov² speaking affably said: “Know, lord king, that you will incur great loss to-day; for my part, I fear the fighting-flails of these peasants.” The king answered, “I know that you Moravians are cowardly and unfaithful to me.” Then the said Lord Henry with the other barons of Moravia immediately leapt from their horses, and he said: “We are prepared to go where thou sendest us, and we shall be there where thou, O king, wilt not be.” Then the king assigned to them the most perilous spot, ordering them to attack the Praguers in the low grounds near the river, where there are many morasses and fishponds. The Hungarians he ordered to march

¹ The agreement between the citizens of Prague and the garrison, stipulating that the latter should capitulate if not relieved before a certain time.

² The leader of the Moravians.

through the upper grounds along the high road, and thence to attack the army of Prague. They then attacked in both directions the Praguers who, though they were behind entrenchments, at first took to flight and crowded round the church of St. Pankrace. Then Lord Krušina¹, seeing this, addressed them in a loud voice, saying, "Dear brethren, turn back and be to-day brave soldiers in Christ's war, for it is God's not your own battle that you are fighting to-day; you will see that the Lord God will deliver into your hands all His enemies and your own." Hardly had he finished speaking when some one cried out: "The enemies fly! they fly!" Hearing this they all rushed manfully forward, drove the enemies from the entrenchments and turned them to flight. The Praguers and the nobles, who were on their side, struck down cruelly those who were flying, some near the marshes and fishponds, many in the fields and vineyards.'

A few, however, were spared, for Březov writes somewhat later: 'Lord Henry of Plumlov was mortally wounded and made a prisoner; he was conveyed to the cemetery of St. Pankrace, and expired there after receiving communion in the two kinds.'

Březov then gives a long list of the Moravian nobles who fell in this memorable battle. I will, however, only quote the last words of his account, obviously written just after he had visited the battlefield; he writes: 'What man who was not more cruel than a pagan could pass through these fields and vineyards, and view the brave bodies of the dead without compassion? What Bohemian, unless he were a madman, could see these dainty and robust warriors, these men so curly-

¹ The leader of the national army.

haired and so comely, without deeply bewailing their fate?’

It should be mentioned that Sigismund's distrust of the Moravians, which caused him to assign to them the most perilous post, contributed to arouse in their favour the sympathy of their Bohemian countrymen.

Professor Ernest Denis, who in his brilliant work *Hus et la Guerre des Hussites* has translated into French a considerable portion of Březov's account of the battle of the Vyšehrad, truthfully writes: ‘There is nothing in history more touching than this grief of the victors who deplore their victory, and—forgetful of temporary divisions and full of pity for their brethren who have separated from them—reserve all their hatred for the foreigner who has encouraged internal strife, profits by it, and strives to rule the country by the destruction of all Bohemian parties.’

I feel that I have already devoted too much time to the chronicle of Lawrence of Březov, though it is the greatest—some have said the only truly great—historical work that deals with the Hussite wars.

Together with his edition of Březov's chronicle, that brilliant historian Professor Goll has also edited two minor documents dealing with the Hussite wars. They are the so-called chronicle of the university of Prague, and that of Bartošek of Drahonic. The former work is a mere compilation of writings derived from various sources; and even its tendency differs, as we find Hussite sympathies in some and Romanist sympathies in other parts of the book. The writer has copied extensively from the chronicle of Březov. The chronicle of Bartošek of Drahonic is the work of a soldier, and warlike deeds obviously alone had interest for the writer. He

served in the armies of Sigismund—it may be noted that he was one of the king's men who garrisoned the Vyšehrad, and he writes as a royalist and a Romanist. Yet that strange antipathy to everything German which is innate in the Bohemian appears in his book also. Thus, when referring to the death of Albrecht of Habsburg, who for a short time succeeded Sigismund as King of Bohemia, he writes: 'He died, after an illness of some weeks, about the octave of St. Gallus; may his soul rest in peace, for he was a good man though a German, brave and merciful.'

Before referring to some other chroniclers belonging to this period whose writings have been edited and collected in one volume by Palacký, I must mention the name of the great Bohemian general John Žižka of Trocnov. Though Žižka is undoubtedly known as a maker rather than a writer of history, yet I feel justified by the example of Bohemian writers on the literature of the country in including Žižka among the historians of Bohemia. Very scant but very precious relics of Žižka's writings have been preserved; they consist of a war-song that has aptly been named the Bohemian Marseillaise of the fifteenth century, a document containing the regulations of war used by the Hussites which give a strange insight into the thoroughly democratic organization of the Bohemian armies, and of several letters on political and military subjects. Of these the most valuable is the celebrated letter 'to the allies of Domažlice.' I do not hesitate to affirm that this letter, plain and matter of fact as it is, is perhaps the most valuable record of the Hussite wars. The citizens of Domažlice¹, a Bohemian town not far from

¹ In German, Tauss.

the Bavarian frontier, were in consequence of their geographical situation very much exposed to German attacks. Obviously rather despondent, they applied to Žižka for aid. The following is Žižka's reply: 'May God grant that you may return to your former reliance and be the first to do worthy deeds, O dear brethren in God. I beg you, for the sake of the Lord God, to remain in the fear of God, as His most beloved sons, and not to complain if He chastises you. Remembering the founder of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, you will defend yourselves bravely against the wrongs which these Germans endeavour to inflict on you. You will thus follow the example of the ancient Bohemians, who valiantly using their lances, defended both God's cause and their own. And we, dear brethren, seeking the law of God and the good of the commonwealth, will do all that is in our power that every one of our men who is able to wield a club, or even to hurl a stone, should march to your aid. And therefore, dear brethren, be it known to you that we are collecting our men from all parts of the country against these enemies of God and devastators of the Bohemian land. Therefore instruct your clergy, that they may when preaching rouse the people against the armies of Antichrist. Let it also be proclaimed in the market-place that all able men, young or old, must be ready at any moment. And we, God willing, will be shortly with you. Have bread, beer, fodder for the horses ready, as well as all weapons of war. For indeed it is time to march not only against the internal enemies, but also against the foreigners. Remember your first campaign, when you fought bravely, humble men against the great, few against many, unclothed against men in armour. For the arm

of God has not been shortened. Therefore trust in God and be ready. May the Lord God grant you strength!'

It is hardly necessary to draw attention to the strongly Cromwellian ring of this stirring letter. I may here note that when I, writing some years ago, compared Žižka to Cromwell, I was quite unaware of the fact that this comparison had been made some years before by the late Bishop Creighton.

I have already alluded to the collection of ancient chronicles, belonging to the period of the Hussite wars, which was edited by Palacký. They are all written in the national language, and are a true but little-explored storehouse for Bohemian historical research. Time obliges me to refrain almost entirely from quotation. Among the most interesting parts of the chronicle is the account of Žižka's invasion of Hungary in 1423, by means of which he hoped to force Sigismund to renounce his claims to the Bohemian crown. Though Žižka obtained brilliant successes, the constant attacks of the Hungarian horsemen finally obliged him to retreat, and it was in this retreat that Žižka's military genius appeared more clearly than on any other occasion. Professor Leger, who has translated into French a considerable portion of the account of Žižka's Hungarian campaign, writes: 'This account written by Xenophon in good Greek of Athens would no doubt have become a classic; but it was unfortunately written in Bohemian by a contemporary, probably an eye-witness.' Another intensely interesting part of this chronicle is the account of the death of Žižka. The chronicler writes: 'Here—at Pribyslav—brother Žižka was seized with a deadly attack of the plague, and gave his last instructions to

his faithful brother-Bohemians, saying that fearing their beloved God they should firmly and faithfully defend God's law in view of His reward in eternity. And then, after brother Žižka had commended his soul to God, he died on the Wednesday before St. Gallus.' So many repulsive tales—which I shall presently have to notice briefly—were afterwards circulated with regard to Žižka's last moments, that this authentic account, probably that of an eye-witness, has great interest. To a Bohemian the peaceful end of Žižka appears most fitting. He who had so often fought what he firmly believed to be God's battle assuredly did not dread entering into God's peace.

It is more because tradition has decreed that Pope Pius II should be counted among the historians of the Hussite war than because the book has any value, that I must briefly allude to the *De Bohemorum Origine et Gestis Historia* of Aeneas Sylvius. The writer, a thorough scholar of the period of the Renaissance, has written his book in the then fashionable Latinity teeming with classical reminiscences. Thus the account of the death of the two Prokops at the battle of Lipan, which closed the Hussite wars, is obviously modelled on Sallust's account of the deaths of Catiline and the men of Fesulæ. This manner of writing—often very effective when dealing with the Italians of the Renaissance—who were not really so very different from their forefathers—is totally out of place when writing of the rugged, northern Puritan Bohemians.

Many untruthful tales concerning Bohemia that have since been incessantly repeated, are due to Aeneas Sylvius; among these is his report of the death of Žižka, whom he describes as dying blas-

pheming and ordering his skin to be used as a drum. It is difficult to read anything more repulsive than this account of the death of a man who, though not untouched by the cruelty of his time, was according to his own lights a fervent Christian and a true Bohemian patriot.

The two last historians of this period whom I shall mention are Bishop Dubravius of Olmütz, and Bartoš, surnamed 'the writer.' Dubravius has left us a Latin history of Bohemia from the earliest period to the accession of Ferdinand I in 1526. The book has little historical value; of the Hussite wars Dubravius writes as a strong and not very scrupulous partisan of Rome.

More interesting is the book of Bartoš, or Bartholomew, surnamed 'the writer.' The book of Bartoš, who was a town official at Prague, is written in Bohemian, and is entitled *Chronicle of the Seditions and Tumults at Prague*. It deals with a period of only fifteen years, and treats of the troubles—caused by two rival demagogues, Hlavsa and Pašek—that broke out at Prague during the reign of the weak King Louis. The portraits of the two rival demagogues are very striking, but I have not time to quote them here. Those interested in the matter will find a translation of this part of Bartoš's book in my *History of Bohemian Literature*. Interesting also are Bartoš's account of the election of Ferdinand I in 1526, and of the introduction of Lutheranism into Bohemia, which for a time diminished the usual antipathy between Bohemians and Germans.

The *Chronicle* of Bartoš carries the history of Bohemia on to the year 1526. That year is a great

landmark in the history of the country. It is the year of the accession of the House of Habsburg. The first attempts to transform the Bohemian monarchy from an elective to a hereditary one date from this time, and the reaction in favour of Rome begins at the same date. I shall in my next lecture treat of the historians of Bohemia from this period up to the year 1620, which for a time almost marks the extinction of the Bohemian nation.

III

THE year 1526 is a very important landmark in the history of Bohemia. It was in this year that Ferdinand of Habsburg, brother of Anne, widow of the late King Louis, was elected King of Bohemia. The election was secured with great difficulty, and by means that were far from being scrupulous. Simultaneously with the foundation of a new dynasty the almost extinct Romanist creed again began to gather strength. There is, of course, a close connexion between these two events, for even at that time the unwritten but almost unbroken alliance between the House of Habsburg and the Roman See had already long been in existence.

Though Ferdinand was, particularly at the beginning of his reign, somewhat tolerant and conciliatory toward his Bohemian subjects, it is certain that he always wished to be considered hereditary ruler and not elected King of Bohemia. These endeavours of the king to enlarge his power estranged the Bohemians, who have always valued their ancient constitution, and Ferdinand's leaning to the Church of Rome caused great discontent.

This feeling of discontent culminated in the outbreak of 1546. Of this struggle we possess a careful and valuable account, written in Bohemian by Sixt of Ottersdorf. Sixt, born in 1500, took no inconsiderable part in the events which he has recorded. As early as in 1537 we find him mentioned as town

clerk of the city of Prague, and he was chancellor of the city in the momentous year 1546. Sixt's book, entitled *Acts and record-book of those troubled years 1546 and 1547*, deals with the conflict between Ferdinand I and the Bohemian Estates caused by the troubles that broke out in Germany in 1546. The German Lutherans had risen in arms against the Emperor Charles, and his brother Ferdinand requested the Bohemians to aid the imperial cause. The Bohemians—mostly members of the Reformed Church—refused this request, and even entered into negotiations with the German Protestants, whose leader Frederick, Elector of Saxony, was a neighbour of Bohemia. While the Bohemians were still undecided, the battle of Mühlberg was fought on April 27, 1547, and the power of the German Protestants was for a time completely broken. The Bohemians, who had done nothing to aid the Elector of Saxony, but much to irritate Ferdinand, now decided to send a deputation—of which Sixt was a member—to their king to convey to him their congratulations on the victory of the imperial arms. The envoys met the King of Bohemia in the camp before Wittenberg, which the imperial forces were then besieging. Sixt's account of the voyage of the envoys through the devastated lands of Saxony is very interesting; very curious also is his account of the meeting of the Bohemians with King Ferdinand, whom they first saw at a distance 'walking among the tents while saying his hours or paternosters.'

The king returned an evasive answer, and shortly afterwards marched into Bohemia. After a short stay at Litomerice¹, he advanced on Prague and occupied

¹ In German, Leitmeritz.



the capital almost without resistance. If we consider the rough justice of those days, it may be said that the Bohemians were treated somewhat mercifully. Only four men—two knights and two townsmen—were decapitated. The executions took place at the gates of the Hradčany Palace on the day on which the Diet—henceforth known as the ‘bloody Diet’—met there. The nobles and knights indeed preserved most of their privileges, but the citizens suffered considerably. The autonomy of the towns was greatly limited, and royal officials to a great extent replaced those that the citizens had hitherto freely elected. Sixt himself was deprived of his office of chancellor of the city of Prague.

Sixt's book, written very shortly after the events with which it deals, mirrors the despondency that overcame the Bohemian townsmen after the curtailment of their autonomy. A man gifted with great political insight, such as was Sixt, probably saw through the crafty policy of Ferdinand. The peasantry had lost its power since the establishment of serfdom. The citizens, who hitherto had mainly upheld the independence of the country, were now to lose a large part of their political weight. There remained the nobles and knights, among whom the influence of the Jesuits was already beginning to spread. Absolutism and Romanism seemed already to loom in the distance.

This despondency shows very clearly in Sixt's Introduction, from which I shall quote a few words; he writes: ‘We have in these days lived to see in reality those things which by divine visions terrified and frightened our ancestors, who said “even should the Almighty God deign to prolong our lives, we do not desire it; neither do we wish to remain longer

in this world"; and during the plague [which preceded the troubles of 1546] we heard little innocent children say to their parents, who wept over them: "You weep over us, but after a few years you will, in consequence of the troubles that will come over you, wish yourselves dead rather than alive!"

Before dealing with the national movement, Sixt gives a detailed account of the meetings of the Bohemian Diets, at which he was himself present as one of the representatives of the city of Prague. He writes: 'The public Diets, that were formerly a general meeting of the Estates, have already been reduced to this, that two or three men only meet—and, what is worse, the king, with his German and Italian councillors, examines all decisions and overrules them when he sees fit to do so, and he suppresses all that is displeasing to him; the Estates have thus no longer the power and liberty of deciding on anything that may be good and useful for the kingdom, and the disorder has become so great that for some years, indeed, almost since the beginning of his¹ reign, we find no decree inscribed in the statute-book that was useful to the commonwealth, but only such as dealt with taxes, contributions, and other matters tending to strengthen the royal prerogative.'

The weakness and irresolution of the Bohemians, who could not decide upon either supporting their king or aiding the German Protestants, their indignation that the king should engage in foreign warfare without the consent of the Diet, and that he should introduce foreign mercenaries into the land—all this is very ably set forth by Sixt. He writes: 'The conviction that

¹ Ferdinand I.

the king had taken the field not only for the purpose of suppressing religious liberty, but that he was also preparing to destroy the constitution of the land, became general. It was, indeed, a thing unheard of that the king should undertake any war whatever in the name of the kingdom without the consent of the Estates, and that he should order them to grant him financial aid according to his own valuation, threatening them with the severest punishments. Besides this, the Italians and other foreigners used threatening language to the citizens of Prague, openly saying that in a short time they would acquire for nothing the houses, the wives and the daughters of the Bohemians, and that they would wade in their blood; they also called the Bohemians traitors and heretics.¹

I cannot, of course, follow Sixt in his account of the mismanaged and ineffectual national rising, and I have already briefly referred to the penalties which were its consequence, and which appear a slight foreshadowing of the terrible events of 1621.

Sixt's book is still little known, and even now no complete printed edition exists, though a considerable portion was reprinted by Professor Tieftrunk¹, while Professor Denis and I have translated some parts of the book into French and English.

~~A contemporary of Sixt, but an historian of a very different character, was Wenceslas Hajek of Libočan. His book, which was 'inspired,' never shared the complete oblivion that was for a long time the fate of most books written in the Bohemian language. Hajek's book therefore became famous, and the author, who~~

¹ In his *Odpor stavů českých proti Ferdinandovi I.*, i.e. *Resistance of the Bohemian Estates to Ferdinand I.*

was known as the 'Bohemian Livy,' ranked as a great historian. It is since Palacký's valuable work, *Würdigung der böhmischen Geschichtschreiber* (*An Appreciation of the Historians of Bohemia*) appeared, that public opinion has completely changed with regard to Hajek. Palacký has clearly proved not only that Hajek was entirely devoid of historical criticism—no uncommon failing at his time—but that he purposely distorted historical facts. This applies particularly to the period of the Hussite wars, the most important one in the annals of Bohemia. His constant purpose is to describe the deeds of the Bohemians of this period and the motives of their leaders in the most unfavourable light. His book shares with that of Aeneas Sylvius the somewhat doubtful merit of having been, up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the very impure source from which all those drew who wrote on the history of Bohemia. Hajek's work was translated into Latin and German at an early date, and it obtained many readers. The book was published under the patronage of Ferdinand I, to whom it was dedicated. Hajek, as he himself states, had been working for six years at his book before he finished it in 1558, and he addressed a petition to the king begging him to grant him a 'privilege'—assure his copyright as we should say—for ten years. To this Ferdinand consented, but he at the same time appointed several officials who were 'diligently to sit in judgement on this chronicle, carefully to look it through, and to strike out and efface whatever in it they might find disorderly.'

Hajek's book may therefore be considered as having been written by order of the Government, who of

course favoured absolutist and Romanist views. Of course, this tendency is not very obvious in the earliest part of the work, where Hajek reproduces the tales and often the very words of Cosmas and Dalimil; but from the time of Hus downward the book is a deliberate and unscrupulous attempt to falsify history. Hajek has not attempted to relate the facts connected with the reign of his patron, for his history ends with the coronation of Ferdinand I at Prague.

Of Hajek's life little is known. We know, however, that he was born an Utraquist, but joined the Church of Rome at an early age. He appears to have been a man of strong and somewhat unscrupulous ambition. We read that as early as in 1524—the exact year of birth is uncertain, but he must at any rate then have been very young—Hajek preached in the church of St. Thomas at Prague. Some time later he obtained the rich deanery of Karlštýn, of which he was afterwards deprived, being accused of having embezzled money belonging to the deanery. About this time he began to write his history, perhaps with the intention of regaining the favour of King Ferdinand and of the Romanist nobles who had granted him their protection. It is no doubt in consequence of this that Hajek's book redounds with effusive praise of the nobility, while he writes somewhat contemptuously of the townsmen.

Hajek appears for a time to have been successful in his attempt to regain the favour of his patrons, for we are told that the provostship of Stará Boleslav¹ was granted to him. This dignity, however, he also appears soon to have forfeited by various offences against canonical law. He finally retired to the Dominican

¹ In German, Alt-Bunzlau.

monastery of St. Anne at Prague, where he died in 1553.

Among the historians of the period beginning with 1526 and ending with 1620, with which I am now dealing, the writers belonging to the community of the Bohemian Brethren undoubtedly held a very high rank. It is true that this is to a certain extent but a conjecture, for during the period of reaction that followed the battle of the White Mountain, the works of the Brethren were specially marked out for destruction by the Jesuits. I shall have occasion in my next lecture, when referring to Dr. Gindely's history of the Bohemian Brethren, again to refer to this interesting community. It is sufficient here to note that the Brethren very carefully preserved all historical records, and, of course, principally all documents that referred to the past of their own community. The archives which they established first at Žamberk¹ and afterwards at Litomyšl must have contained many documents of priceless value for the history of Bohemia. Of these writers who belonged to the community of the Brethren, Brother Jan Blahoslav certainly enjoyed the greatest fame. His *Historie Bratřská* (*History of the Brotherhood*), of which but scanty fragments have been preserved, was greatly praised by his contemporaries, not only for its erudition and profoundness—it was based on the archives of the community—but also for the pureness of its Bohemian style. It is one of the great merits of the Brethren that they bestowed great pains on the development of the national language. A memorial of these endeavours is the Bohemian version of the Bible known as the Bible of Králice. It was published about the

¹ In German, Senftenberg.

end of the sixteenth century, and was the joint work of several divines of the Brotherhood.

Brother Blahoslav was a very prominent member of the community. According to Dr. Jireček, who has published an interesting study of him, Blahoslav was born at Přerov, in Moravia, in 1523, of a family that was probably of noble descent. Early in life he visited Wittenberg and attended Luther's sermons. Their influence on him seems to have been very great, as he became a member of that section of the Brotherhood which was in close touch with the German Reformers. During a later journey Blahoslav also met Melancthon, who, we are told, 'made many inquiries concerning Bohemian matters.' He afterwards settled as one of the divines of his community at Mladá Boleslav¹ in Bohemia, and here began to work at his history of the Brotherhood. Towards the end of his life he became a superior, or, as they were sometimes called, bishop, of his community, and continued his indefatigable labours up to 1571, when he died at Krumlov, while on a journey of inspection. Though only fragments of Blahoslav's great historical work remain, some of his writings have been preserved, but as they are not of a historical character they require no notice here.

I shall on the other hand now mention a work that was long attributed to Blahoslav. The authorship of the book entitled *The Life of Jan Augusta* has given rise to one of those controversies which are almost inevitable when—as was the case in Bohemia—an almost forgotten literature is rediscovered after a lapse of two centuries. It was formerly believed that *The Life of Jan Augusta* was a work of Blahoslav, and

¹ In German, Jung-Bunzlau.

afterwards that he had only written part of the book, but the most recent critics state that the author of the book was Jacob Bílek, a member of the Brotherhood and Bishop Augusta's companion in prison, but that the book was written under the supervision of Blahoslav.

After the national rising of 1546 and 1547, the always clear-headed policy of King Ferdinand I had endeavoured to divide the Bohemians. The nobles and knights had to a large extent been restored to the royal favour, while the townsmen had lost a large part of their former rights. Similarly the king was lenient to the Utraquists, but relentless in his attitude towards the members of the Brotherhood. That community was then entirely under the direction of John ¹ Augusta, whom it afterwards chose as its bishop. When after the speedy collapse of the Bohemian movement severe measures were taken against the Brethren, Augusta and his secretary were treacherously seized and conveyed to the Hradčany castle at Prague, where they were examined judicially and suffered torture. They were then conveyed to the castle of Türlitz or Křivoklat, where Augusta remained up to 1564, while Bílek obtained his liberty in 1561.

Bílek's book which, though entitled *The Life of Augusta*, is really only an account of his imprisonment, is very touching and pathetic. The little incidents of prison-life that appear so great to the captive are recorded in a manner which—as I wrote some time ago—occasionally reminds the reader of Silvio Pellico's *Prigioni*.

It is not very clear what the exact accusation

¹ In Bohemian, 'Jan.'

levelled against Augusta and Bílek was. Dr. Jireček, however, states that the Brethren were said to have prayed for the success of the German Protestants, and also to have granted them financial aid. Bílek, to whom Augusta had entrusted the financial affairs of the community, was accused of having sent a large sum of money to the Elector of Saxony and Wittenberg. The efforts of the Austrian officials to induce the Brethren to confess these and other offences were, however, ineffectual, though very severe torture was employed. Bílek has left us in his book a very graphic account of their interrogatory, and of the manner in which torture was applied to them during the intervals of the questioning. Finally, Bílek writes, 'the officials ordered that he (Augusta) should again be placed on the rack because of the questions mentioned before; but it did not last long, as he had become quite silent and swooned away. I think, had they but continued a little longer, he would have died during the torture.'

As already mentioned, it was at last decided that Augusta and Bílek should be imprisoned at the castle of Křivoklat, and they were conveyed there from Prague in the night of May 25, 1548. I will translate only a brief passage from Bílek's description of their prison-life. He writes: 'In the year 1550, the Lord God wrought a great miracle, opening out for them in their secrecy and seclusion a path that was also secret and secluded, thus enabling their friends to visit them and to receive news from them; and this happened thus: among the guards who watched them, and had strict injunctions how to watch over them, there was a servant who knew them slightly and knew what men

they were, for he had formerly been in service at Litomyšl. He well knew that they suffered all this not because of any evil deed that they had committed, but because of the religion; he therefore felt a certain pity for them. Risking everything, he then consented to give them all they required, and that was sent them by their brethren and friends, as well as to forward all their communications to their friends. He began doing this in 1550, before the day of the Conversion of St. Paul, and continued it up to the year 1553. He obtained for both of them letters from their brethren and dear friends, ink, paper, and all that is required for writing. He also brought them some books and other things that they required, such as money and tapers, and they accepted them not without much concern for the man's sake; for they feared that he would forfeit his life, if it were discovered that he had given them these things. As regards themselves, they had in everything commended themselves to God and to His grace, whatever might befall, and they knew that they had acted well. They were therefore not much concerned about themselves, and rejoiced that God had granted them these things, accepting them with much gratitude and thanksgiving, and praising the Lord therefore.' I regret to be unable to quote more extensively from this interesting little book. The last years of Augusta's captivity were somewhat lightened by the kindness of Philippina Welser, the morganatic wife of the archduke Ferdinand, who then resided at Křivoklat. Before leaving Bílek I should mention that his book—which was written in Bohemian—has recently been translated into German by Dr. Joseph Müller¹,

¹ Leipzig, Josef Jansa, 1895.

a distinguished member of the community of Herrenhut.

~~Among the historians who belonged to the community of the Brethren, Wenceslas Březan deserves a prominent place, though his works also have unfortunately been only partially preserved.~~ Of Březan's life little is known; and the Jesuit Balbinus, usually a somewhat generous adversary, has not disdained to attempt to sully his memory by repeating unworthy and untruthful tales concerning Březan. Though the dates cannot be settled with absolute certainty, it may be roughly affirmed that Březan was born about the year 1560, and died about the year 1619. He was probably from his early youth in the service of the great Bohemian House of Rosenberg; and Peter Vok of Rosenberg, the last of that great line, conferred on him the title of 'archivist and historiographer of the House of Rosenberg.' We have reports of numerous historical works by Březan, but many of them have been lost. His great work was entitled *The Annals of the House of Rosenberg*. The book consisted of five parts, two of which have been preserved and recently printed. Writing in 1830, Palacký says: 'Wenceslas Březan, the last archivist of the Rosenberg family at Třeboň or Wittingau, was a genealogist and biographer to whom none other is equal. He collected all his facts principally from the inexhaustible treasures of his archives, which he had studied with indefatigable diligence. His historical narrative is superior to that of all his contemporaries as regards clearness, thoroughness, truthfulness and reliability, and nothing is more to be regretted than that his works have remained unprinted and generally unnoticed.'

As I have already mentioned, since this was written the last two parts of the Rosenberg chronicle—the lives of William and of Peter of Rosenberg—have been published, the former in 1847 by the society of the Bohemian museum under the auspices of Palacký himself, the latter in 1880 by Mr. Mareš, now archivist at Wittingau. Of the two biographies that of William of Rosenberg, the less interesting of the two brothers, is the more valuable.

William of Rosenberg held high office in the service of the empire, and Březan's biography has great historical value. Particularly interesting is Březan's account of the negotiations in connexion with the candidature of William for the Polish throne. It is a proof of the strength and power of the great Bohemian nobles of this time that William did not fear to appear as rival even of the Emperor Maximilian, who himself coveted the Polish throne. Březan writes under the year 1574: 'After the flight of Henry of Valois the Poles sought a new king; some inclined to the House of Austria, others desired Lord William of Rosenberg, particularly as he was a descendant of the ancient family of the Orsinis, and as by his ancestors several centuries back he was a Bohemian, thus belonging to a cognate country, and because he was a sensible, learned, temperate, Catholic nobleman.'

This candidature evidently caused some displeasure at the court of Vienna. Under 1576 Březan writes: 'Our sovereign Lord (that is William of Rosenberg) incurred greatly the suspicion of His Majesty (the Emperor) because he was favoured by the Polish lords, and it was suggested that he had acted rather in his own interest than in that of the House of Austria. But

this prudent lord who wished to avoid all slights, harm and danger in connexion with this matter, bore himself with great wisdom. . . . He also let the Poles know that he had no intention of obtaining their kingdom by begging or purchase, but that if he was legally, publicly and unanimously chosen, he would, without offence to His Majesty the Emperor, not disdain such an election. Thus he succeeded in remaining on good terms with both parties.'

As I wrote some time ago, Březan's biography of Lord Peter of Rosenberg is somewhat disappointing. Though the thought should be rejected as frivolous, one cannot help imagining what a biography of Peter of Rosenberg from the pen of an impressionist historian might have been.

Though a man of such exceptional talent and ability such as Lord Peter, can never be considered as typical, yet he is a good example of the peculiar character which the exceptional surrounding of a great Bohemian nobleman of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century produced. These noblemen lived in vast castles, the centres of enormous estates, some of which were of the size of German duchies. They were equally removed from the influence of popular opinion and from that of the royal and imperial courts which afterwards turned great nobles into courtiers. There was every inducement to give way to originality and even eccentricity, and both are obvious in Lord Peter. He was devoted to alchemy and a great collector of paintings and sculpture. The library and archives of Třeboň were to him of constant interest. The head of the only great Bohemian family that had always upheld the cause of Rome, he joined the community of the Bohemian Brethren.

This change of faith was, of course, an event of the highest political importance in Bohemia. Rosenberg, after joining the national party, for a time took a great though somewhat amateurish interest in politics. He formed a close political alliance with Christian of Anhalt, perhaps the greatest statesman of the seventeenth century. I must hurry to the close of this short notice of Březan's work. I have been able to deal with it somewhat more fully in my *History of Bohemian Literature*. I will, however, quote a portion of the rather striking description of the personality of Rosenberg which Březan gives; he writes: 'He (Lord Peter) was a nobleman of well-shaped figure, and more refined than his brother William. His features were charming, his manners dignified and truly princely; his speech was sensible; he was compassionate and affable; and though he was sometimes angry, whenever he had scolded or cursed some one, he always afterwards excused himself with mild words. He was a gay and jocose nobleman, though in his old age he gave himself up entirely to piety, and read religious books with pleasure, and listened eagerly to the word of God. He was keen for all novelties, a lover of all sciences and arts, and he spent large sums on them. He had a special fancy and predilection for building, and in this resembled his brother William. He was in the habit of standing oftener than sitting, and of walking constantly and so quickly that it was difficult for even young men to keep up with him. . . . He was a very valorous nobleman, courageous, and even somewhat venturesome; for he boldly approached wild beasts, bears, wolves, horses, and dogs without feeling any fear. And, on the whole, I do not know that there was anything wanting in this

heroic personage, except that which he himself deplored on his death-bed, that he had not sufficiently cultivated the study of literature.'

Peter of Rosenberg died in 1611, only seven years before the general conflagration broke out which Christian of Anhalt and he had foreseen, and in view of which they had formed deep-laid plans. It is only since the works of Gindely (to whom I shall refer in my next lecture) have appeared that it has become obvious how inevitable the Bohemian rising of 1618 was. Through the indefatigable and not always scrupulous energy of the Jesuits, a part of the Bohemian nobility—not as yet a considerable one, but it included some of the greatest nobles—had been converted to the Church of Rome. The outspoken hostility of these men to the national Church irritated the large majority of the Bohemian people who belonged to it. On the other hand, many Protestants no doubt thought it better to precipitate the inevitable conflict, before the energy of the Jesuits had further thinned the nationalist ranks. ~~A temporary lull was indeed the result of the document signed in 1609 by King Rudolph, which is known in history as the 'Letter of Majesty,' and which guaranteed the rights and liberties of the Protestants, as all those who did not conform with the Church of Rome were now called. On the same day another agreement was signed by the Romanist and Protestant members of the Diet, in which they guaranteed full religious liberty to each other. Unfortunately, in December, 1617, the Romanists violated this agreement¹.~~

¹ It is, of course, impossible to enter into this matter here. I must refer those interested in these events to Dr. Gindely's *Geschichte Rudolphs II.*, *Geschichte der Ertheilung des Majestätsbriefes*, and *Geschichte des dreissigjährigen Krieges*. Founding my statements

The Protestants immediately rose in arms. On May 23, 1618, the Austrian officials were thrown from the windows of the Hradčany palace, and a provisional government was formed. On August 26, 1619, the Count Palatine Frederick was elected King of Bohemia. His want of military talent and even of courage rendered him quite unable to resist the Romanist coalition that was speedily formed, and which included Austria, Bavaria, Spain, and Poland. The defeat of the Bohemian forces at the battle of the White Mountain ended the existence of Bohemia as an independent country, and for a time it appeared probable that even the national language would disappear. A melancholy epilogue to these tragic events were the executions at Prague on June 21, 1621.

Of these stirring events we have two contemporary accounts, both written in the national language by men who themselves played a part in these events. Of these writers one, William Count Slavata, was one of the most trusted councillors of the Emperor Ferdinand II; the other, Skála ze Zhoře, a Protestant and a government official of King Frederick.

William Count Slavata, Lord of Chlum and Košumberk, is well known to all students of the Thirty Years' War. He enjoyed high favour at the court of Vienna during the reigns of both Ferdinand II and Ferdinand III. Born in 1572 as a member of the Bohemian Brotherhood, he joined the Church of Rome in 1597, to the great indignation of the members of his family, who all belonged to the Brotherhood. Probably in con-

mainly on Dr. Gindely's works, I have in my *Bohemia, an Historical Sketch* briefly referred to the question as to which party first violated the agreement of 1609, thus causing the Thirty Years' War.

sequence of these family dissensions Slavata—who in early youth had already travelled extensively in Italy—now undertook another long journey through England, Scotland, Denmark, and other countries. On his return to Bohemia he soon found favour at court, and obtained high offices of state. He was one of the very few Bohemian nobles who opposed the granting of the 'Letter of Majesty' in 1609, and in 1619 he was one of the Austrian officials who were thrown from the windows of the Hradčany palace. I shall presently quote part of Skála's account of this memorable event.

It is not my purpose to refer to Slavata's political career. He was one of the principal agents in the re-establishment of the Church of Rome in Bohemia, and contributed largely to the downfall of Wallenstein, whose personal enemy he was, and whom he probably rightly—suspected of wishing to re-establish liberty of religion in Bohemia.

The literary activity of Slavata is a slight but curious incident in the career of Slavata. Dr. Jireček, who some years ago edited the most valuable part of Slavata's works, tells us that he in 1636 accompanied the Emperor Ferdinand to the Diet held at Regensburg. A pamphlet written by his old adversary, Count Thurn, here fell into his hands. The pamphlet dealt mainly with the then recent assassination of Wallenstein, but Slavata also found in it an allusion to the defenestration, all mention of which—as Dr. Jireček writes—greatly irritated Slavata. Thurn stated that the throwing of the officials from the Hradčany windows was a just deed, and that they had deserved such punishment.

After consulting some of his friends, Slavata resolved to write his memoirs of the period of 1608 to 1619,

and incidentally to refute Thurn. These memoirs or *paměty*, as they are called in Bohemian, have great value, as Slavata constantly quotes state papers to which he had free access. They long remained in manuscript, but were edited and published by the late Dr. Jireček some years ago. They lend themselves very little to brief quotations. In my *History of Bohemian Literature* I have quoted a considerable portion of Slavata's account of the banquet which King Frederick's officials gave to the envoys whom the Sultan had sent to Prague. It is a masterpiece of finesse and skilful animosity.

In the last years of his life Slavata appears to have acquired a taste for writing history. He wrote a very extensive book, entitled *Historical Works*, consisting of fourteen manuscript volumes. The memoirs already mentioned were included in this book. The rest of the huge work, in which Slavata treats of the history of Bohemia from the earliest times, has little value. Slavata's principal authorities are Aenaeas Sylvius and Hajek, and a lengthy treatise (included in the book), which attempts to prove that the Bohemian crown was hereditary, is inconclusive and was unnecessary, as the matter had been settled 'by blood and iron' at the battle of the White Mountain.

I shall now refer to Paul Skála ze Zhoře, one of the greatest historians of Bohemia, perhaps her greatest, before the days of Palacký. Skála was born at Zatec¹ in 1583. He received his earliest education at Prague, and afterwards visited the then far-famed University of Wittenberg, then the centre of Protestant learning. In 1603 Skála returned to his country and settled at Žatec, where he took considerable part in local politics,

¹ In German, Saas.

always proving himself a firm adherent of the cause of Church reform. In the memorable year 1618, Skála proceeded to Prague, where he held office; first under the provisional government, and then under that of King Frederick. After the battle of the White Mountain he fled from Bohemia, and followed King Frederick into exile. He remained at his court up to the year 1622, and was employed by him on several diplomatic missions. In 1622 Frederick, on the advice of his father-in-law King James, endeavoured to come to terms with the House of Austria, and was prepared to renounce his claims to the Bohemian throne for that purpose. An exiled Bohemian was, therefore, no longer a welcome guest at Frederick's court. Skála now retired to Freiberg in Saxony, where he lived in seclusion for a considerable time, dying probably not long after the year 1640, in which his name is mentioned for the last time.

It was at Freiberg that Skála devoted himself to historical study. Besides minor works, to which I have not time to refer, Skála wrote at Freiberg his *Historie Církevní* (*History of the Church*), the most extensive, as well as one of the most valuable historical works in the Bohemian language. The book, which consists of ten large folio volumes—the largest has 1,700 pages, the others not much fewer—has been preserved in manuscript in Count Waldstein's library. In spite of its name, it deals as much with political as with ecclesiastical matters. It begins with 'The conversion of the heathens to the Christian faith, and the terrible subjection of that faith to the yoke of Antichrist,' and ends with the year 1623.

Some years ago, the learned Professor Tieftunk published, in two large volumes, a considerable portion

of Skála's book, namely, those chapters that deal with the affairs of Bohemia from 1602 to 1623. Professor Tieftrunk writes in his introduction: 'These years can be considered as a closely-connected period, and as the melancholy conclusion of the more glorious days of Bohemian history.'

I can only quote a few passages from Skála's work that refer to these memorable years, and will first translate some portion of his account of the defenestration; he writes: 'On the twenty-third of May, the day that is the beginning and opening of all the misery and misfortunes that followed, the representatives of the cities met at 8 in the morning at the Hradčany palace. Then Joachim Andrew Count Šlik meeting the representatives of the town of Slary, seized them both by the hand, and after carefully looking around the room (for at that time many Romanists were spying in all parts of the palace) he said: "I know that the estate of the townsmen is honourable and noble-minded, and that its members are honourable and noble-minded men, useful to their cities. . . . Therefore do I place my trust in you that you will keep to yourselves what I shall tell you. You well know that the Romanists¹ wish to deprive us of the Letter of Majesty, which through the grace of God we obtained, with difficulty enough, and this with God's help we will not permit. You will see and hear to-day terrible and unheard-of things, such as neither your ancestors nor mine ever saw or heard; things that will not please those who communicate in one kind. For the lords intend sin-

¹ In the Bohemian original 'jedineškové,' men who receive communion in one kind; the word was a nickname in the political warfare of Bohemia. To avoid giving a lengthy explanation, I have substituted the far less picturesque word 'Romanist.'

cerely to uphold the Letter of Majesty in its substance and its integrity, and will treat those who violate it as they deserve. Also, I do not doubt that you in the towns are in the habit of reading *Historias et Annales Bohemiae* [these words are in Latin in the original], and that you well know how great were the liberties of the estate of the citizens under King Sigismund and King Wenceslas, and how much you forfeited and lost under King Ferdinand.”

This passage proves, what indeed is admitted by all modern Bohemian historians, that the defenestration was a premeditated act. The Bohemians honestly believed that they were inflicting punishment according to law—the law of Judge Lynch, it must be admitted—on the Austrian officials.

I can only quote briefly from Skála's detailed account of the actual defenestration. The nobles entered the council-chamber where the imperial officials were sitting. The latter refused to give an immediate answer to the Bohemians, who demanded guarantees for the liberty of their religion. A long discussion began, in which Counts Thurn and Šlik, Lobkovic, Kaplíř, and other Bohemian nobles took part, while Martini and Slavata—the other imperial councillors had fled—were too terrified to say much in their own defence.

‘Immediately afterwards,’ Skála writes, ‘voices were heard among the nobles suggesting that these scoundrels should be arrested and hurried off¹ to the Black Tower², but others cried out that the traitors should be thrown out of the windows.’

¹ In the original ‘vandrovali,’ to wander. It is unfortunately impossible to reproduce the humour of the Bohemian wording.

² One of the state-prisons on the Hradčany.

'Then,' Skála writes, 'Count Thurn rapidly approached Slavata and seized him by the hand, while Ulrick Kinsky seized Martinic. . . . Then Thurn and Kinsky led them through the crowd of nobles, and then only did every one know that they were to be thrown from the windows. . . . Martinic mournfully entreated that he might be granted a confessor; he received the short answer that he should commend his soul to God. Slavata did not ask for a confessor, but prayed to the Lord to be with him.

'No mercy was granted them, and first Martinic was dragged to the window, near which the secretaries generally worked, for Kinsky was quicker and had more aid than Count Thurn, who had first seized Slavata. They were then both thrown, dressed in their cloaks and with their swords and decorations, just as they had been found in the chancellor's office, one after the other, head foremost, out of the westward window into the moat beneath the palace, which by a wall is divided from the other deeper moat. They loudly screamed "Alas! alas!" and attempted to hold on to the window-frame, but were at last obliged to let go, as they were struck on the hands.'

Skála gives us an interesting account—obviously founded on documentary evidence—of the attempts of the Bohemian government to obtain aid in its struggle against the House of Habsburg. The Austrian party displayed an equally great and more successful energy, and Bohemia became for a time the centre of European diplomacy. As I am addressing an English audience, it will, I think, be appropriate if I mention Skála's remarks on the English policy with regard to the Bohemian question. After mentioning that Frederick founded

great hopes on the aid of Louis of France, as the Electors Palatine had been allies of Henry IV, Skála writes: 'But all these hopes proved vain, principally through the fault of his (Frederick's) father-in-law, James, King of Great Britain; for the latter doing in this matter nothing or next to nothing, the neighbouring kings and potentates felt induced to follow his example, and, as it were, watching the events through their fingers, took up the cause of the son of the King of England, but carelessly and sleepily. Therefore it was no wonder that at last this young prince (Frederick) was necessarily defeated, and lost not only the Bohemian crown but also all his lands, and even the hereditary dignity of elector.

'Now this King James was in this matter exceedingly indifferent, and evidently knew not how to take a final decision; for the matter on one side certainly touched his son-in-law and his own flesh and blood, and on the other the emperor and the King of Spain. He therefore neither wished to forsake his son-in-law, nor to incense those sovereigns with whom he lived on terms of peace. He greatly hoped that through his sagacity he could, by means of embassies and friendly letters, allay these misunderstandings. He was greatly strengthened and confirmed in these views by the Spanish agents and envoys who were constantly around him, and who wished to keep him to the resolution not to take up arms to help his son-in-law, the Elector Palatine.'

Skála naturally gives a detailed account of the battle of the White Mountain, which was the death-bed of Bohemian independence. Conscientious and rather lengthy historian as he always is, he has incorporated

several contemporary accounts in his narrative, but it is obvious that it required some effort to him to refer to the latest and least glorious battle fought by the Bohemians as an independent people.

Where we again find Skála at his best is when we reach the executions of Prague, which were one of the results of the catastrophe of the White Mountain.

The Austrian government, which seems at first to have intended to assume a lenient attitude, soon decided to act with the utmost severity. After referring to the trial of the Bohemian leaders, and the evidence which by means of torture was obtained against them, Skála writes: 'Thus was enacted this most doleful tragedy, hitherto unknown and unheard of in the Bohemian kingdom. But as it is of much interest to know in what frame of mind a man leaves this world (be his death natural or violent) and whether he leaves it with contentment or with sorrow, and how he prepares for it—therefore will I give here, word by word, the last sayings of these men according to the accounts of three clergymen who were present during the last moments of the Bohemian prisoners, and prepared them for the violent and, in the eyes of the world, dishonourable death that awaited them.' I can, of course, only quote a few lines from Skála. Of the death of one of the Bohemian leaders, Dvořecký of Olbramovič, he writes: 'When the judges called out his name, he referred to the House of Austria, saying that it had wrought much evil to the Bohemian kingdom, and that it was obvious that it would continue to do so. Then he sent word to his lady wife and his son, begging them to remain true to the religion.

'When they again called his name, he declared that

he was ready, and then said: "God be praised; may His holy will be done! I have lived for Him, and I now also die for Him. But as my Redeemer died and then arose from the dead to rule over the quick and the dead, so do I also believe that my soul will live and that my body will arise again on the day of resurrection, and then will be similar to His bright and splendid body." Then he prayed for some time.

'When they reached the scaffold, he turned to the balcony where the imperialist judges sat, and said, "Tell that emperor that I now stand before his unjust court of justice, but that he will once appear before a terrible and a just one." The drums were beaten so loudly that it was only with difficulty that his words were heard. Then advised by the priest John, he turned to the scaffold, knelt down and prepared himself. Then, seeing his purse on the scaffold, he seized it and gave to one who was standing near a golden coin that had been struck in commemoration of the coronation of King Frederick, saying: "I bind you by your oath, when my dear King Frederick returns to the royal throne, to give this coin to him, and to tell him that I have carried it with me up to the scaffold because of the love that I bear him, and that for his cause I gladly shed my blood and die." Then he knelt down, and while crying with a loud voice "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me and receive my soul!" he blessedly ended his life and repaired to heaven.'

I have only time to quote one other passage from Skála's narrative. It refers to the leave-taking of the Bohemian patriots, when they were separately led forth to execution. He writes: 'This is worthy of notice, that when one of these holy men and martyrs

for God's cause was called forth, then to our great surprise a leave-taking ensued in a pleasant manner which rejoiced our hearts, just as if they were preparing to go to a banquet or some festival: "Now, my dear friends, may our Lord God bless you, may He grant you the consolations of the Holy Ghost, patience and courage, so that you may be able to prove now also in the moment of your death that you have heartily and bravely defended the honour of God. I go before you that I may first behold the glory of God, the glory of our beloved Redeemer, but I await you directly after me. Already in this hour earthly grief vanishes, and a new heart-felt and eternal gladness begins." The other prisoners who remained behind answered: "May our Lord God bless you on your way for the sake of the guiltless death of Christ; may He send His holy angels to meet your soul. You go before us to the glory of heaven. We also shall follow you, and we are certain, because of Him in whom we have believed, Jesus Christ, that we shall meet again to-day, and rejoice for ever with our beloved Redeemer, the angels and the chosen of God."

Of the minor writers who belong to this period, I shall mention only two, who both wrote in Latin, and both wrote in exile.

The *Bellum Bohemicum* of Andrew of Habernfeld, a very scarce little volume, has considerable historical value. He fought on the national side at the battle of the White Mountain, of which he gives a spirited account that incidentally is very damaging to King Frederick. 'After the battle was already almost lost,' Habernfeld writes, 'a rumour reached the king that the enemies were attacking the Bohemian camp. In-

interrupting his banquet he mounted his horse, wishing to view his endangered camp. A troop of fifty horsemen had arrived at the castle. I was myself one of those who interrupted the banquet. When the king reached the Strahov gate, it was closed. He beheld the terrible spectacle of his army in full flight. Terrified also by the fearful screams of the women, the king returned to the castle.'

Paul Stranský's work, *Respublica Bojema*, was written while the author was living as an exile in Holland, and on the suggestion of those celebrated publishers the Elzevirs. It appeared in 1643, and was dedicated to the sons of King Frederick, Rupert and Maurice, princes of the Palatinate. It contains in one small volume a short outline of the ancient constitution of Bohemia, which is still valuable, and a brief sketch of the history of the country. Considering that Stranský had, as he himself tells us, been deprived of his entire fortune by the Imperialists, it must be admitted that the book is written with great moderation.

Both Skála and the two last-named authors wrote while in exile. In Bohemia historical and indeed all literature ceased for a time after the battle of the White Mountain. There is, with a few trifling exceptions, an interval of two centuries, speaking roughly, between the historians to whom I have now referred, and those who will be the subject of my last lecture.

IV

IT is not my purpose to refer here in any detail to the enormous changes in Bohemia that were the consequence of the battle of the White Mountain. The ancient constitution of the country was suppressed, and a system of slightly veiled absolutism replaced it. Confiscations of land took place on an enormous scale, and foreign nobles, mainly generals of the imperial army, obtained the estates of the ancient Protestant nobility of Bohemia. The inhabitants of the towns, many of which had been strongholds of the national Church, were driven into exile; and immigrants, generally of German birth, took their place. As regards the peasantry whom the system of serfdom attached to the soil, for the cultivation of which they were required, sinister arguments such as the pillory, the whipping-post, and the gallows, gradually induced them to conform to the Church of Rome. It is, however, to the credit of my countrymen to mention that many long remained true to their ancient faith and secretly held their religious services at night-time in the dense pine-forests of Bohemia, and preserved, as hidden treasures, copies of the Bible of Králice, the Bohemian version of the Scriptures which was the joint work of several divines of the Brotherhood.

The modern historian Dr. Gindely has given a graphic account of the sufferings of the Bohemians at

this period, which are almost unequalled in history. 'The Bohemians,' he writes, 'had not even the resource of appealing to their sovereign; for no petty Austrian official or Jesuit missionary was more determined than Ferdinand to kill or exile all Bohemians who did not conform to the Church of Rome.' Thus when remonstrances were made to Ferdinand on behalf of the Protestants of Kutna Hora¹, he angrily declared that the citizens of Kutna Hora were 'not men but brutes'², because they would not accept the one saving creed. Even during the vicissitudes of the Thirty Years' War, Ferdinand always considered the conversion of Bohemia to the Roman Church as a matter of the greatest importance. The papal see gave him no more than his due when it declared him to be 'a second Constantine.'

Little or no Bohemian literature³ of this period exists. The national language, considered a language of heretics, was persecuted in every way. Jesuits, who were accompanied by soldiers, scoured the country in every direction, and as the Jesuit was generally ignorant of the national language, he destroyed all Bohemian books. It was the intention of the government to induce the Bohemians to forget as far as possible all traditions of their past glory. It is a striking proof of this tendency that even Pope Pius II's book on the history of Bohemia was prohibited.

The few writers on Bohemian history wrote mainly in German and Latin, though their sympathy was generally with their own people.

¹ In German, Kutttenberg.

² Gindely, *Geschichte der Gegenreformation in Böhmen*, p. 235.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

Of these writers, far the most important was the learned Jesuit Balbinus. He was born in 1621 at Králové Hradec¹, of a family that belonged to the ancient nobility of that district. He was consecrated as a priest in 1650, and was sent as a missionary to his native district, that of Králové Hradec. The brutality and cruelty which these missionaries displayed in the execution of their task of conversion was naturally displeasing to a truly pious man such as was Balbinus. He also appears not to have won the approval of his superiors, for he was recalled, and henceforth employed as a teacher. He made great researches in the archives of various towns and castles, which he visited in his new capacity. The result of these studies was his *Epitome Historica Rerum Bohemicarum*, in which he has given an extensive account of events connected with Bohemia, laying great stress on the foundation of churches and monasteries, and ecclesiastical matters generally. Of course the writer, a Jesuit, writes of the Hussite wars in the only then permissible manner, and gives the then usual distorted accounts of the careers of Hus, Žižka, and the other great Bohemians. None the less, the book raised the suspicions of Count Martinic, then Governor of Bohemia. It indeed required the mind of an inquisitor to detect here and there a vestige of Bohemian national feeling. Yet the book was for a time suppressed, Balbinus fell into disgrace, and was sent to Klatov almost as an exile.

While at Klatov Balbinus wrote (also in Latin) an *Apology for the Slavic and specially the Bohemian Tongue*, which he dedicated to his friend Canon Pešina. Knowing the hostility that the Bohemian language

¹ In German, Königgrätz.

incurred as being the language of heretics, Balbinus skilfully drew the attention of his readers to the period anterior to Hus, 'when Bohemia, now so mournful, was in a happy condition.'

In the last years of his life, Balbinus (who died in 1688) began the publication of one of those colossal works in which the Bohemians of that period delighted. The book, entitled *A Miscellany of Bohemian History*, does full justice to its title. Beside a large amount of historical narrative, the book contains a treatise on the natural history of Bohemia, numerous pedigrees of Bohemian nobles (they fill a whole volume), numerous biographies of Bohemians, and much other matter.

In connexion with Balbinus I should next mention his friend, Canon Tomas Pešina, who has left several historical works, written in Latin, which refer to the history of Bohemia and the sister-land Moravia.

The greater number of the historians of this period wrote in German. It is in this language that Bienenberg's historical works, and Pubička's and Pelzl's histories of Bohemia, were written. Though written in a foreign tongue, these works, that belong to the latter part of the eighteenth century, show traces of a revival of the ancient national feeling among the Bohemians, and, as it were, form a prelude to the revival of the Bohemian nation in the following century.

It is not my purpose to refer here to their national movement, except as far as it concerns the study of history. But as the greatest of the leaders of this movement, Francis Palacký, was a historian, it deserves mention here. This revival, largely based on historical reminiscences, in fact on what the enemies of the country would call sentimental motives, is one of the

really important events—so different from those that temporarily appear important—which will render the nineteenth century memorable. The reconstruction of a Slavic state in central Europe, a Slavic outpost in the midst of Teutonic lands, will probably have a considerable influence on the future of Europe.

The movement had a very modest origin, and was at first indirectly and unintentionally furthered by one who was a determined enemy of the Bohemian people. I refer to the Emperor Joseph II, who was also king, though uncrowned king, of Bohemia. That monarch was thoroughly imbued with the views held by the enlightened sovereigns of the eighteenth century of whom Frederick the Great is the type. These men were in many ways in advance of their times. Their desire to further public education, to diminish the privileges of the omnipotent nobility and a luxurious and wealthy clergy, to assure at least a limited amount of equality before the law, and to grant some liberty to the press, cannot fail to be admired by all enlightened men. That these men absolutely failed to grasp the value which a people attaches to its nationality and language is also certain. Joseph's contempt for the Bohemian language—founded indeed on ignorance—was not greater than that which Frederick the Great, whose brilliant works are all written in French, felt for the German language.

It is certain that, by allowing the publication of a newspaper written in the Bohemian language, by permitting the printing of the works of ancient Bohemian authors and the translation of foreign works into the national language, Joseph considerably con-

tributed to the result that Bohemian again became a written language.

Francis Palacký, the most important of the Bohemian national leaders and the founder of the modern Bohemian historical school—to whom all who now attempt such studies must look up with reverence—was born on June 14, 1798, at Hodslavice in Moravia. His ancestors had belonged to the community of the Bohemian Brethren, and had indeed only nominally conformed to the Church of Rome, when after the battle of the White Mountain all religious freedom was suppressed in Moravia, as well as in Bohemia. The Emperor Joseph II indeed granted religious freedom to the members of the 'Helvetic' and 'Augsburg' confessions, as the adherents of Calvin and Luther were described by the ultramontane Austrian officials, but no mention was made of the ancient Bohemian Brotherhood. Palacký's parents therefore declared themselves members of the Augsburg Church, which they believed to be nearest to their old traditional faith.

It is often noticeable in Palacký's great historical ~~work that the writer was brought up in the traditions of the Brotherhood, though he but seldom allows his~~ personal sympathies to appear, and though he was also constantly embarrassed by the action of the Austrian government, which hardly permitted the publication of any statement adverse to the Church of Rome. Palacký's father, a man of learning, gave him his first instruction, and he then continued his education at the Protestant school of Presburg in Hungary. In that town, situated in a Slavic part of Hungary, Palacký's sympathies with the Slavic cause naturally became more intense. He here also first made the acquaint-

tance of Šafařík, the celebrated philologist, who was one of the principal promoters of the Bohemian revival. This acquaintance developed into a lifelong friendship. Palacký, however, by no means restricted his studies to Slavic languages. With that facility for acquiring foreign tongues which is said to be innate in the Slav, he also acquired several languages of Western Europe. As Professor Kalousek tells us in his contribution to the Palacký memorial, a volume published in 1898 on the occasion of the centenary of the birth of the great historian, Palacký studied English writers with great attention. Bolingbroke's *Letters on the Study and Use of History*, and particularly Blair's lectures on rhetoric and belles-lettres, greatly influenced the youthful Palacký. Recently looking over the pages of the last-named now forgotten book, I was struck by the fact that Palacký's great historical work so largely conforms to the rules laid down in Blair's lecture on 'Historical Writing.'

I must add that the interest which Palacký always manifested in England and English literature has not obtained much recognition for him on the part of English writers. When the Palacký memorial, which I have already mentioned, appeared in 1898, I was requested to contribute a small note on the references to Palacký in the works of English writers. I was surprised to find how scanty they were, and that only the late Bishop Creighton had obviously thoroughly studied Palacký's historical writings.

The Hungarian government was even at that time hostile to the pursuit of Slavic studies, and Palacký resolved to establish himself at Prague, where he enjoyed the protection of the Abbé Dobrovský, one

of the older Slavic scholars, and a man who was on good terms with the authorities—an all-important matter in Austria during the Metternich régime. It was here that Palacký formed the plan of his vast historical work. Palacký was introduced by Dobrovský to the not very numerous Bohemian nobles who were interested in the history of their country. Among these were Count Sternberg and his younger brother, Count Francis Sternberg. The latter had a few years previously, in conjunction with Count Klebelsberg and my great-uncle, Count Kolowrat, founded an association that was known as the Society of the Bohemian Museum. This at first modest society endeavoured to collect all objects and documents connected with the history of Bohemia, hoping to revive the national feeling by recalling to the Bohemians their glorious past and their national language that is so closely connected with it. This society and the small collections which it at first possessed were then housed in a small house belonging to Count Sternberg. After having been for some time removed to more extensive premises, the Bohemian Museum and its now vast and valuable collections found a home in the place of St. Venceslas, that is known to all visitors to Prague.

The Patriotic Association at first met with a great deal of opposition. The Austrian government assumed an attitude of veiled hostility, and considerable indifference was shown even by those of Bohemian birth. At a meeting at Count Sternberg's house, which took place in 1825, both the Count himself and Dobrovský bitterly complained of the want of interest shown as regards the new national institute. Young Palacký, however, (I quote from a contemporary account),

declared that this indifference was the fault of the authorities of the Museum, and that it was their duty to further the Bohemian literature and language. When the elder Count Sternberg replied that it was too late to raise the Bohemian nation from the dead, the young patriot became angry, and abandoning the defensive attitude began to attack his opponents. He warmly reproached Dobrovský for writing in German only, and ended with the fiery words: 'If we all act thus, then indeed our nation must perish through intellectual famine. As for me, even if I was a gipsy by birth and the last descendant of that race, I should consider it as my duty to strive with all my might that honoured records of my race should be preserved to the history of humanity.' It is very much to the credit of the older patriots that they agreed with the remarks of Palacký, whose hopes, as need hardly now be mentioned, have since been justified by time. It was resolved that a literary and scientific journal, entitled the *Journal of the Bohemian Museum*¹, should be published both in Bohemian and in German. The Bohemian edition has been continued up to the present day, and may still be considered the foremost literary periodical of Bohemia. The German edition, on the other hand, was abandoned after a few years. Palacký became the first editor, and some of his first historical studies appeared in the journal. About the same time he received the appointment of archivist to Count Sternberg, an appointment that not only slightly added to his modest income, but also gave him a recognized social position at Prague—no unimportant matter at a time when Metternich's omnipresent police viewed all

¹ Časopis Českého Muzea.

literary men, and particularly those who wrote on Slavic subjects, with intense suspicion. Palacký also, through his personal acquaintance with some of the great nobles of Bohemia, obtained permission to study the valuable historical documents contained in their libraries and archives. The study of the treasures contained in some of these archives, particularly in those at Třeboň or Wittengau, convinced Palacký that the history of Bohemia had still to be written. Though he may have had some such intention previously, it was only then that he resolved to write an extensive history of Bohemia. The difficulties that beset his path were very great. I cannot define them better than by quoting Palacký's own words¹. He writes: 'While the system of imperial censure existed, it was quite impossible plainly to state that the action of the government rendered impossible the progress and development of historical study and research. The government authorities, no doubt, well knew that the former attitude of the Austrian government with regard to Bohemia would find no mercy before the judgement-seat of history, even though the sufferers could no longer make their grievances known. What happened in the interior of Bohemia during the Thirty Years' War is even now one of those secrets of history that make the few who have attempted even slightly to lift the veil, tremble. I was some time ago asked by men of some importance whether it would not be better if the unhappy and melancholy events of the past were consigned to complete oblivion, rather than that an attempt should be made to incite men's minds by recalling these events, thus disturbing the happy peace

¹ *Zur böhmischen Geschichtschreibung*, p. 2.

of the present time. These men knew nothing of the events of the past, but they felt instinctively that an account of the past would excite men's minds. No wonder therefore that the government did not further historical studies, and indeed endeavoured to hinder them in every way.'

I should here mention that when Palacký afterwards undertook his great historical work, he, contrary to his original plan, only dealt with the history of Bohemia up to the year 1526, which marks the accession of the Habsburg dynasty to the Bohemian throne. Even this did not, as I shall mention presently, prevent the government authorities from molesting him on various occasions.

The opposition of the Austrian government was not the only obstacle that Palacký found in his path. To a man of scant private means as he was, the probably small number of readers, and the uncertainty—caused by the caprices of the 'censors'—as to when the different volumes could appear, rendered the publication of his great work a very difficult thing. Fortunately the Estates of Bohemia came to his aid. Animated by that tacit antagonism between Vienna and Prague that is one of the great features of Austrian history, they resolved in 1829 to confer on Palacký the title of historiographer of Bohemia, and to attach to it a modest salary. This resolution was, however, vetoed by the authorities of Vienna, but they finally consented, though reluctantly, to allow the Estates of Bohemia to bear the costs of the publication of Palacký's book. It should be mentioned that ten years later (in 1839) the Austrian government permitted the Estates to confer on Palacký the title of historiographer of Bohemia.

The first volume of Palacký's history of Bohemia appeared in 1836. It deals with the first settlement of the Slavic race in Bohemia. Recent critics—even among the author's countrymen—accuse Palacký of having idealized the primitive Čechs. It is indeed true that the optimist views of Rousseau and Herder are somewhat obvious in the book. The dark conception of a universal and eternal struggle for existence had not then replaced the conception of an Arcadian and innocent primitive mankind. The preface of this volume deserves quotation, for it indicates the spirit in which Palacký undertook his vast historical work. He writes: 'As regards the principles and intentions which have guided me while working at this history, I have hardly a word to say. I know of no others, except those that proceed naturally from the supreme principle of regard for historical truth and faith. That I write from the standpoint of a Bohemian is a fact for which I could only be blamed, if it rendered me unjust either to the Bohemians or to their opponents. I hope, however, that my sincere craving for truth, my respect for all laws, divine and human, my zeal for order and legality, my sympathy with the weal and woe of all mankind, will preserve me from the sin of partiality. With God's help, these principles will continue to guide me in my task.'

I should here remark that the first volume of Palacký's great work first appeared in German, and was subsequently translated into Bohemian. It was only after the revolutionary year 1848, when the dissensions between the Bohemians and the Germans—who had previously treated the Bohemians with somewhat contemptuous indulgence—became more intense,

that Palacký began to publish his history first in the national language.

From the year 1836 the history of Bohemia became the life-work of Palacký. It was indeed only in 1876, the year of his death, that the last sheets of the revised edition of the work were ready for the press. The book was a political event in Bohemia, and largely contributed to further the political career of its author. The book proceeded slowly, and in the face of constant opposition of the government officials who were known as the 'censors.' Palacký has, in one of his German works, written most entertaining pages on his struggles with the censors. These conflicts turned principally on Palacký's account of the career of Hus. It is hardly necessary to say that the police-officials, who did duty as literary critics, were absolutely incapable of judging the career of Hus. This did not prevent them from interfering with Palacký's work. When the latter wrote that the courage displayed by Hus during his trial forced even his adversaries to admire him, the censor declared that 'the Catholic Church does not see in Hus's attitude undaunted courage, but insolence and obstinacy founded on utter blindness.' Palacký had also ventured to quote Poggio Bracciolini's well-known account of the death of Jerome of Prague, which from the time of Aeneas Sylvius downward has been frequently reproduced. The censor, none the less, had his doubts concerning the authenticity of the letter, and also stated that, in any case, it described Jerome as a philosopher, a man worthy of admiration, and one whose death should be regretted. This judgement (the censor continued) is out of place, and likely to lead astray those who are little versed in history.

The incessant molestations of the censors finally induced Palacký to address to the government authorities a manly letter which he has preserved in one of his later works. After excusing himself with regard to the fact that his narrative threw favourable, rather than unfavourable, light on the career of Hus, and referring to the existent historical authorities, he wrote: 'Another reason for my judging Hus favourably, consists in the undeniable importance and value of the man. According to my innermost conviction and, I may add, according to the opinion of all unprejudiced judges, Hus strove only for the good, though the means by which he furthered his endeavours were not all devoid of sin, and therefore not blameless. It is in this sense that I have written my account, and I do not think that it contains anything that is at all opposed or contrary to a truly Catholic mind. If I have been mistaken as regards certain details, I gladly accept corrections and will include them in my book. I cannot, however, believe that it is an indispensable demand of Catholicism that every deed and thought of Hus should be unconditionally condemned, that his portrait should be painted entirely in black, and that all circumstances that appear favourable to him—even if historically uncontested—should be suppressed. Such a one-sided and unjust account would, unfortunately, constitute not an historical work but a party-pamphlet. The censor seems to expect something similar from me. Should this apprehension prove justified, I regret being obliged to declare that I shall never accede to such a demand. I should prefer to give up my whole work and abandon the study of history. A historian has high and extensive obligations, which must to him be as sacred as

are, for instance, those of a professor of dogmatics or of an inquisitor. . . .’

The matter was eventually settled amicably, though Palacký was obliged to eliminate considerable passages from his book, as well as to insert considerable interpolations from the pen of the censor, which had to pass as Palacký’s own work. After the year 1848, when the police-censorship of the press was abolished, Palacký was able to publish a new edition of his work, in which he restored most of the passages that had been eliminated and suppressed the additions dictated by the censor.

I should here state that when dealing with the life and works of Palacký I have principally laid stress on the events of his life—which I have as far as possible related in his own words—and on his historical criticisms. It would be superfluous to give extracts from his large historical work. It is, of course, founded on the ancient records, many of which were then still preserved in manuscript, though they have now been printed. I should therefore run the risk of repeating accounts of events to which I have already referred in my previous lectures.

One of the results of the revolutionary events of 1848 was that the Bohemian national movement, that had previously been almost exclusively literary, now assumed a political character. It was natural that when the Bohemians were called on to elect representatives to the constituent assembly that met at Vienna, their choice largely fell on men of letters. Of historians, Palacký was elected by seven constituencies; and the younger historian Tomek—to whom I shall refer later—was also one of the representatives of Bohemia. Palacký took little part in the proceedings

of the short-lived parliamentary assembly that met at Vienna in the spring of 1848 and was transferred to Kroměřice¹ in the autumn of that year. Palacký was also a member of the ill-omened Slavic congress of Prague, and was asked to take part in the German assembly at Frankfurt. Previously to the meeting of the German parliament, the most prominent German statesmen met in conference. As the treaty of Vienna had—though without the consent of the estates—included Bohemia in the Germanic confederation, Palacký was invited to take part in this conference. His answer caused great sensation, and became a watchword to the Bohemians. Palacký wrote: 'I am not a German, but a Bohemian. Whatever talent I possess is at the service of my own country. My nation is certainly a small one, but it has always maintained its historic individuality. The rulers of Bohemia have often been on terms of intimacy with the German princes, but the Bohemian people has never considered itself as German.'

Almost all the ephemeral attempts at establishing constitutional government in continental countries in the year 1848 failed. Austria, at the end of the year 1852, was again an absolutist country. During this period of absolutism, which lasted up to the year 1860, Palacký retired into private life, devoting himself entirely to the continuation of his great historical work. Censure was indeed not re-established, but Palacký now encountered a much more serious danger. The whole Austrian empire was then under martial law, and the authorities seriously considered whether the great historian should be tried by a court martial.

¹ Kremsier.

The disasters of the year 1859 proved the impossibility of continuing a system of absolutist government that was in direct contradiction to the ancient historical constitutions of Bohemia and Hungary. The sovereign again granted constitutional institutions, and it was resolved to establish in Vienna a central parliament consisting of two houses. The upper house was to contain a large number of hereditary members, and a certain number of life-members appointed by the sovereign. Among the latter was Palacký. He was now generally recognized as the leader of Bohemia, as *Otec Vlasti*, 'father of the country,' as it became customary to call him. Palacký only spoke twice in the Vienna parliament—on both occasions in the year 1861. His words have since become prophetic. Palacký opposed the claims of the Hungarians, who demanded that almost entire independence which they have since obtained. He disapproved of the creation of new small states at a moment when all Europe was in favour of large agglomerations; for Italy was then beginning to become a united country, and to a shrewd statesman as was Palacký the subsequent unity of Germany also already appeared probable. Palacký therefore recommended a federal constitution for the whole empire, which, while largely recognizing the ancient constitutions of Bohemia and Hungary, yet permitted the vast empire of the Habsburgs to maintain a certain amount of coherence. Palacký's views were distasteful to most of the members of the parliament; and he left the Vienna assembly, never again to take his seat there.

The subsequent evolutions of Austrian politics through which Hungary in 1867 obtained almost complete independence, while Bohemia became a mere

Austrian province, were treated by Palacký with contempt that was generally silent. His age, and his position as member of the upper house of the Vienna parliament, secured him against all personal molestation.

There was again a change in the political situation, when the Emperor Francis Joseph issued his memorable decree of September 14, 1871. He there declared that 'in consideration of the former constitutional position of Bohemia, and remembering the power and glory which its crown had conferred upon his ancestors, and the constant fidelity of its population, he gladly recognized the rights of the kingdom of Bohemia, and was willing to confirm his assurance by taking the coronation oath.' This important declaration for a short time caused the return of Palacký to political life, but his hopes were destined again to be disappointed.

In his last years the old historian, thoroughly disgusted with Austrian politics, frequently declared that 'Bohemia existed before Austria, and would exist after Austria'—an expression that became almost proverbial. In 1876 the Bohemian edition of Palacký's great historical work was completed, and this event was the subject of great rejoicing among the Bohemian people. Their joy, however, was turned into grief, for Francis Palacký died on May 26 of the same year. His funeral was the occasion of general national mourning in Bohemia.

I have as yet only referred to Palacký's history of Bohemia, which is of course his masterpiece, but some of his shorter works have great value. One of the earliest of these is a book written in German, which is entitled *Würdigung der alten böhmischen Geschichtschrei-*

ber (*An Appreciation of the Ancient Historians of Bohemia*). The book appeared in 1830, and it is difficult at the present day to realize how great its value then was, as it covered then almost unknown ground. The work of Březov, Bartoš, and many other early historians then existed in often inaccessible manuscripts, and were almost unknown. I need not say that I have, in my earlier lectures, largely used the contents of Palacký's book.

In 1842 Palacký wrote for the journal of the Bohemian Museum an essay entitled *The Forerunners of Hussitism in Bohemia*. He afterwards forwarded it to the censor's office, but as the permission to print it in book form was long delayed, he abandoned the idea. A copy of the Bohemian manuscript came into the hands of Dr. Jordan, a scholar of Leipzig; he translated it into German, and with Palacký's consent published it under his (Dr. Jordan's) own name. In consequence of the strange vicissitudes of this book, which were the result of the narrow-mindedness of the Austrian authorities, it was long believed to be a German work by Dr. Jordan, and was even quoted as such. It was only in 1869 that a new edition of the work, giving the true name of the author, appeared. The book is very valuable, for, as stated in the preface, it deals mainly with prominent men whose names were little known, even to the learned. Even now, when the great work of Bishop Creighton has somewhat enlightened the English public, the names of Conrad of Waldhausen, Milič of Kremsier, and Matthew of Janod are known but to few.

It was inevitable that a work such as Palacký's great history, animated by strong enthusiasm for the Bohemian nation and dealing fairly with Hus and the Hussites, should find many opponents. During the period of

extreme reaction and ultramontaniam, which in Austria succeeded to the revolutions of 1848, several writers came forward, who attacked the views of Palacký and his account of the Hussite movement in particular. Baron Helfert, a high official of the Austrian government, wrote a life of Hus in which he attempted to refute Palacký's narrative. The book, though of course entirely written in accordance with the views of Rome, yet treats its subject with fairness and moderation.

As much cannot be said of the most famous of Palacký's opponents, Professor Höfler. Under the protection of the Austrian government—the book was printed at the imperial printing-press—Höfler began to publish a series of volumes containing the works of the historians of the Hussite movement. It is not my purpose to enter here into the controversy which this publication caused, but it can be truthfully stated that in the choice of his materials Höfler was constantly and persistently guided by the endeavour to place the Hussites in the most unfavourable light. The book is to a large extent polemical, and in the third volume a larger space is occupied by Höfler's own reflections than by the writings of ancient historians. Höfler's inaccuracy is proverbial in Bohemia. Palacký's book, which I shall mention presently, gives hundreds of examples; I shall here limit myself to one. Höfler tells us¹ that in 1426 Žižka established *Prügelherrschaft* (the rule of the stick) in Prague. It would have been difficult for Žižka to establish that or any rule in the year mentioned, as he died in 1424—a fact known to every Bohemian schoolboy.

¹ Höfler, *Geschichte der Hussitischen Bewegung in Böhmen*, vol. iii, p. 171.

This attack on the Hussite movement, and on himself as its historian, justly incensed Palacký. In reply to it Palacký wrote the small but brilliant book, entitled *Die Geschichte des Hussitenthumes und Professor Höfler*. The controversy is antiquated, but incidentally Palacký here expressed his views of the Hussite period more clearly than anywhere else. After defining the historical method of Höfler and his school, Palacký writes: 'Other historians, to whom I have the honour to belong, have stated that the Hussite war is the first war in the world's history that was fought not for material interests but for intellectual ones, that is to say, for ideas. This ideal standpoint was so seriously and sincerely taken up by the Bohemians, that even when they were victors they never thought of substituting for it a more interested one. It is true that during the war they forced foreign communities to pay taxes and an annual tribute to them; but they never thought of subduing them or of extending their dominion over foreign lands—a thing that under the circumstances of the time would not have been difficult. I know that among the modern school of German historians there are persons (Palacký uses the rather contemptuous German word *Subjecte*) who attribute this attitude mainly to the political incapacity of the ancient Bohemians, and who with brutal derision attempt to deduce from it their racial inferiority. I leave it to a more enlightened posterity to decide which conduct is nearer to barbarism—that of the disinterested victor, or that of the imperious and rapacious conqueror. Two centuries later, the enemies after one victory—that of the White Mountain—certainly acted differently, and endeavoured in every way

to use their victory for the purpose of material gain. Was their conduct nobler and more Christian?

'As to the Hussites they never, during their prolonged and heroic struggle, ceased to consider it and to term it a fight for the liberty of God's word. Was this the consequence of illusion or arrogance? I have already mentioned that the so-called world-ruling authority of the mediaeval Church had at that time almost arrived at that stage, that it considered the teaching both of holy writ and of reason as unnecessary and superfluous, in view of the Holy Ghost which controlled the Church. I have also noticed that in spite of the undeniable merit of most of the ecclesiastical regulations, an equally undeniable corruption prevailed among all ranks of the hierarchy. On its path to ecclesiastical omnipotence the hierarchic system of the Middle Ages first encountered resistance on the part of the Hussites, who cried "Stop." They forced the hierarchy to recognize the existence of something higher without it and above it, and also to learn to respect the right of men to form their own opinions and to give utterance to them. This something higher, which was now generally recognized, was that which the Hussites termed "the word of God," namely the holy scripture and the apostolic spirit by which it is inspired. I do not wish to infer that the Church was by this recognition diverted from its original path; but the events of the Hussite war certainly somewhat restored it to its consciousness, and it henceforth avoided diverting yet further from holy writ, and continuing further on its downward path. The absolute authority of the Church in spiritual matters indeed ceased, but not the Christian character of its mission.'

Though much has been written on the Hussite movement, no one—not even Palacký himself in any other passage—had defined that movement so clearly and so truly as Palacký has here.

Before leaving Palacký's works, I should mention that he edited several very valuable collections of documents relating to ancient Bohemian history.

The brilliant example of Palacký naturally and fortunately obtained for him numerous and able successors. Though as one who has himself attempted to write on the history of Bohemia, I make this statement with some diffidence, I think that it is in the field of historiography that the Bohemian writers of the period of revival had achieved the greatest success. I shall be able to give but a slight sketch of these writers, and shall mention first those that have already departed, thus diverging slightly from the chronological order; for the Nestor of Bohemian historiography, and one of the greatest of Bohemian historians, Professor Tomek, is fortunately still alive and still actively occupied with his favourite studies.

Dr. Anton Gindely, born in 1829, has left numerous valuable historical works, some of which are written in German, others in Bohemian. He has principally occupied himself with the last years of Bohemian independence. His works on the history of the Letter of Majesty, on Rudolph II and his times, his history of the counter-reformation in Bohemia—which unfortunately remained unfinished—have thrown an immense amount of light on the history of Bohemia during the last years of independence. The immense influence of Christian of Anhalt on the affairs of Bohemia, his endeavours to enlist against the House of Habsburg the

court of Turin, which would thus have anticipated by two centuries the policy of Cavour—these and many other facts were by Gindely dug out of the archives where they had been so long concealed. Gindely's masterpiece would no doubt have been his history of the Thirty Years' War, had he lived to complete the work.

Professor Tieftrunk (born 1829, and who died in 1897) left a considerable number of writings. His only considerable historical work is his *Odpor Stavů Českých proti Ferdinandovi*, that is to say, *The Opposition of the Bohemian Estate to Ferdinand I.* The book is founded on the contemporary account of Sixt of Ottersdorf, which I mentioned in my last lecture, and on research in archives. Tieftrunk also edited and published part of Skála ze Zhoře's vast historical work.

Among living Bohemian historians, Professor Wenceslas Vladivoj Tomek undoubtedly holds the foremost place. Born in 1818, he has, during his long life, devoted himself entirely to the study of history. In his younger days he was an assistant of Palacký, who was one of the first to appreciate his talent. I will not attempt to enumerate the works of Tomek. His life of Žižka is, perhaps, one of the most interesting of his minor works; and he has also written several smaller books on the history of Bohemia and modern Austria.

His great work, however, is his *History of the Town of Prague*. Twelve volumes, which bring the history of the city down to the year 1608, have already appeared. Tomek always writes as a strong conservative—I had almost said an apologist of absolute rule. Yet in his account of Hus (who was so closely con-

nected with Prague) he has spoken very freely, and his views are perhaps more hostile to the views of Rome than those of Palacký. As I mentioned, Tomek's history of Prague is still unfinished, but all those who are friends of Bohemia will hope that time will be granted the veteran to finish his gigantic task, which will rank with Gregorovius's *Rome in the Middle Ages* as one of the greatest town-histories of modern times.

It would be difficult to give in a limited space of time more than a very brief account of the modern historians of Bohemia. I should not, however, do justice to my subject, if I omitted to mention the work of Professor Josef Kalousek. He has devoted much time to the study of the early Christian records of Bohemia, and particularly to the legend of St. Wenceslas. Of his many historical works the most interesting appears to me to be his *České Státní Právo*—in a rough translation, *The Bohemian Constitution*. I think a brief quotation from this valuable book will throw some light on the subject of the ancient constitution of Bohemia—a subject that is almost unknown. Kalousek writes: 'The ancient constitution of Bohemia and Moravia, like others grounded on feudal principles, had a considerable likeness to modern constitutions; but there was also in many respects a considerable difference. The power of the sovereign in Bohemia and Moravia was limited; in this respect we find a considerable likeness to the so-called modern constitutional system. There is in this also a likeness, that while both the ancient institutions of Bohemia and modern constitutionalism limit the power of the ruler with regard to certain matters, they yet reserve certain rights to the sovereign

and grant him unlimited power in certain cases. The first difference, however, appears in this, that the matters in which the power of the sovereign was unlimited were not always the same as they are in modern constitutions but sometimes quite different. Thus, for instance, the Bohemian king had a considerable income that was not voted or controlled by the Estates, while the modern constitutional system renders all matters of finance dependent on the consent of the people. On the other hand, the modern constitutional system usually imposes no restrictions as regards the armed forces of the country. The sovereign is lord of war and peace, and can engage the country in war even against its will. The king, according to the Bohemian constitution, had not this full power. But the principal difference between the constitution based on the Estates and modern constitutions is comprised in the answer to the question, Who shared with the sovereign the sovereign rights, or rather, who controlled the royal power? This factor which, beside the sovereign, directly participates in the exercise of sovereign rights, consists in modern times of the representatives of the people generally, chosen either by the whole adult male population or by a comparatively large proportion of the more wealthy and more educated citizens, partly also of those who are selected among the large landowners and higher officials of the country. In the old Bohemian constitution this factor consisted exclusively of privileged classes of people who were known as the "Estates." Among these representatives that element prevailed which is still dominant in the English House of Lords, the higher nobility which owned vast estates in the land.'

The existence of the ancient Bohemian constitution, similar in many ways to that of mediaeval England, is a fact so little known that I have thought it interesting to give this quotation from Professor Kalousek's valuable book.

The next historian whom I shall mention is Professor Jaroslav Goll, born in 1846—one of the most distinguished Bohemian historians and professors of the Bohemian University of Prague. Many of his earlier works deal with the interesting community of the Bohemian Brethren. These writings are mostly Bohemian, but some have appeared in German also under the title of *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der böhmischen Brüder*, and they open a new world to the reader. It is only by reading these books that the student can conceive this strange community. Dr. Gindely had, indeed, written of the Bohemian Brethren, but in Professor Goll's books they live. When preparing, some years ago, my works on the history and literature of Bohemia, I carefully studied Professor Goll's books, and their fascination has for me always remained. His portraits of Chelčický, the originator of the Brotherhood, and of Brother Gregory its founder—'the patriarch of the Brotherhood,' as he was called in his later days—are masterpieces. I will extract from my *History of Bohemian Literature* Professor Goll's account of Brother Gregory, which I have there translated; he writes: 'Gregory had created for himself the ideal conception of a true Christian, an abstemious, kindly, patient, gracious, merciful, pure, humble-minded, peaceful, worthy, zealous, yielding, compliant man, qualified and ready to do all good works. But this ideal was for Gregory not an

ideal only. He believed that Christians can come near to it, nay, even attain it.'

Of Professor Goll's other works, I should mention his recent book, *Čechy a Prusky ve středověku* (*Bohemia and Prussia in the Middle Ages*). Of this book, which is a model of Bohemian prose, Dr. Flajšhans writes in his *History of Bohemian Literature*: 'We read it as if it were a romance, and yet we know that it is scientifically as correct as an astronomic table.'

A very distinguished Bohemian historian of the present day is Dr. Rezek, born in 1853. He has carefully studied the years immediately before and after the ~~election of Ferdinand of Habsburg~~ to the Bohemian throne in 1526. Palacký's monumental work ends with that year, and Dr. Rezek here writes as a continuator of his book. Dr. Rezek was for some time a member of the Austrian cabinet, but he resigned when the political situation rendered the presence of a Bohemian patriot in the Austrian cabinet impossible. Dr. Rezek intends to devote himself again to historical work, as he has indeed himself told me. A continuous work on the history of Bohemia from 1526 to 1620 is indeed much to be desired, and no one would be more qualified to undertake this task than a learned, conscientious, and talented historian such as is Dr. Rezek.

Limiting myself strictly to writers of history, I cannot here refer to those who have written on the history of Bohemian literature. Prominent among these is Dr. Flajšhans, whose history of the literature of his country is very valuable. Dr. Flajšhans's studies on Hus entitle him to be considered a historian also. The work, entitled *Master John Hus*, which he has recently

begun, promises well, and will probably prove a valuable contribution to the knowledge of the great Bohemian, who has been so little understood and so often misrepresented.

It is, I think, fitting that I should terminate these lectures by again referring to the great name of Palacký, whom I have so often mentioned.

In 1876 (the year of Palacký's death) a banquet was given to celebrate the termination of his great historical work, to which he had only in that year given the final touch. The veteran then addressed the audience, consisting mainly of men of a younger generation: 'Being now able,' he said, 'to address the flower of the nation, I wish to attract the attention of my friends—and all are my friends who work for the welfare of the nation—to the one thing that is most necessary, and it is this. We have many patriots, who are proud of their patriotism; but they do nothing for the benefit of the country and of their native land. Our nation is in great danger, surrounded as it is by enemies in every direction; but I do not despair. I hope that it will be able to vanquish them if it has but the will to do so. It is not enough to say "I will." Every one must co-operate, must work, must make what sacrifices he can for the common welfare, for the preservation of our nationality.

'Bohemia has a glorious past. The time of Hus was glorious. The Bohemian nation was then intellectually in advance of all other European nations. For this it was indebted not only to Charles IV (who founded the University of Prague), but also to its own will to extend the culture of the country. It is necessary that we also should do so. This is the testament

that, speaking almost as a dying man, I wish to leave to my nation.'

It is to conform, as far as it is in my limited power, with the injunctions of the great leader of the Bohemian people, that I have ventured to give these lectures at Oxford.

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